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ABSTRACT

This guide for expectant and new working parents addresses practical and emotional issues that complicate the task of balancing work and family. Chapter 1, which addresses maternity and paternity leave, and the Pregnancy Disability Act, provides information regarding preparation for maternity leave after childbirth. Included are a worksheet to aid the negotiation and planning of a leave and suggestions for making the most of a leave. Chapter 2 explores aspects of deciding to work. Chapter 3 identifies concerns shared by new working parents, including those related to guilt, family relationships, breastfeeding, and working. Chapter 4, which concerns the search for high quality infant day care, probes the issues of whether substitute care is harmful or helpful; what constitutes high quality infant day care; what the available types of infant day care are; and how to get coworkers involved in day care. Provided are a guide to finding day care and checklists for evaluating day care facilities and providers. Chapter 5 offers a strategy for time and energy management. "Reality tamers" found effective by working parents are suggested. A discussion on ways to recognize sources of stress and find methods of coping is provided. Chapter 6 covers interpersonal survival skills. Chapter 7 addresses issues raised by expectant and new working fathers. Appendices provide lists of resources and readings. (RH)

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BACK TO WORK:

A GUIDE FOR EXPECTANT AND NEW WORKING PARENTS

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MARY PARYS O'BRIEN

BACK TO WORK:

A GUIDE FOR EXPECTANT AND NEW WORKING PARENTS

MARY PARYS O'BRIEN

Edited by Lynette K. Pauling

Transitions

Minneapolis, Minnesota

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TO: Dan and the little O'Briens - Molly, Thomas, Margaret, Bridget and Kathleen Tierney Andrus
who have invested more in me than they could ever imagine.

Anyone who has worked with expectant couples and/or new parents knows how much we learn from them. I began writing this book four years ago and in the process started teaching "Mom and Dad Go Back to Work." That experience made the book grow far beyond what I could have written before having the unparalled opportunity of listening to new working parents. It was their needs, their concerns, their feedback and direction that guided Back to Work's final format. It will be your continued input that will help me and Back to Work continue to grow.

One aspect of working parenthood this book doesn't address directly is being a single working parent. I sincerely hope there are many sections of Back to Work single parents can benefit from. But since my primary work has been with couples - and since my own personal experience has been as part of a couple - I truly felt unqualified to address the very special needs a single working parent has. Rather than include two or three pages specific to single parenting, I have chosen to emphasize working parent couples. Recognizing that many single parents have their own special support systems and significant others, I hope that you can find appropriate, helpful information in Back to Work.

Finally I want to express my sincere appreciation to friends and family who have lived through the ups and downs involved in this project. Without their support and encouragement the book would have never been published. Special thanks to: Judy Berven, Barbara Parys Compobasso, Karen Elliot, Marlene Garvis, Kaye Gilbertson, Lynn O'Brien, Margaret O'Brien, Joe and Julie Parys, Joey and Lori Parys, Lynette Pauling, JoAnn Parys Rakoczy, Carol Seifert, Peg Swanson and Norma Williams.

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Introduction

Four weeks ago I entered the job market on a full-time basis for the first time in nine years. Since my inception into the workplace, I have lost my primary day care provider to a kidney stone and my back-up provider to another job. Currently my toddler is in one day care home and my two school-aged children are in another. My kitchen counters are full of three day old peanut butter and jelly, and the clothes will no longer go "down" the chute because it is full to the top. To say that editing this book was timely is an understatement. I literally clung to the chapter on day care and carried it around in my briefcase for security and reference during day care interviews.

And yet, this is much more than a day care book. More importantly, this is a book about parents--parents who choose, or have no choice, other than to work. Mary addresses the practical issues facing working parents, as well as the emotional issues complicating the fine art of balancing work and family. This is not just a "Mom" book (although it is for every mother); this is a "Dad" book, too. It is a human book for real people who only want the best for themselves and their children. This is an information book, but it also gives permission and validation, comfort and support to those of us whose counters are perpetually cluttered and whose days will continually be 2.5 hours too short.

--Lynette K. Pauling, Editor
Immediate Past President, Childbirth Education Association of Greater Minneapolis-St. Paul

BEFORE WE GET STARTED

This book has been designed to be practical, realistic and most of all useable. You're at a point in your lives when perhaps time (and maybe money) is at a premium. Entering the world of parenthood is exciting, unpredictable, joyous, agonizing - everything you hoped it would be and nothing you thought it might be. It would be wonderful to have months and years of nothing to do but adjust to being Mom and Dad. Today that just isn't possible, since you're also entering the world of working parenthood, which holds all the ups and downs that "regular" parenthood holds and then some.

To make maximum use of this book, let me encourage you to do youselves and your baby a favor. Buy a notebook, a folder or legal pad that you can use as you read this book. In many places you'll be encouraged to write down your thoughts and feelings, or to do a specific exercise. It's helpful to have this all in one place, at your fingertips. A notebook would be my personal choice because you can use it as a journal, too. (I didn't spend eight years as an English teacher without some of it rubbing off on me.) Childbirth Educator editor Marsha Rehns suggests the same: spend a minute or two each day documenting the last few weeks of your pregnancy and then every day of your baby's life. Realize that we're not talking about daily pages or volumes. Two or three sentences may be more than enough and more than you have time for. How are you feeling today? What's going on at work that might influence your outlook? And how's the baby doing? This is something both Mom and Dad can do, in the same or separate notebooks. (Some people prefer to keep their journals quite private.) Bob Greene's Good Morning, Merry Sunshine is an example of a father-kept journal.

Please use this book often. I encourage parents in the Mom and Dad classes to complete the exercises in Chapter 2, Making the Working Parent Decision every three to six months. As your baby grows and changes, his needs will be different and subsequently so

will yours. What seemed like good reasoning when your infant was six weeks old may not be so applicable when she's six months old.

And please let me know what new approaches Back to Work can and should take. The important thing to remember is that we're all in this working parent boat together. While it's not a cruise ship, it's also not a sinking life raft. I like the analogy of a canoe. It requires two people paddling to keep it on course. While it tips easily, it also rights just as easily and if you can't get it upright immediately, at least you can hang on for awhile. Working parent families survive and thrive because we serve as support for each other. We care about each other. Your experiences and your willingness to share them can and does make a difference.

CHAPTER ONE

The Rights of the Pregnant Family

The traditional American family of the 1980's - our parents would hardly recognize us. If anything, the stereotyped American family is no longer the tradition. We may be older than our parents were when they began having children. Unlike our mothers, we remain at work well into late pregnancy, rather than quitting once we begin to "show." We're continuing to work outside our homes after our babies arrive while our mothers, in most cases, probably never considered this as an option. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that by 1990 the collective American family will include seventeen million preschoolers with working mothers/parents.

What would the Cleavers think? No doubt today June would not be home, dressed in pearls and baking cookies for the mischevious but loveable Wally and the Beave. She probably would be one of the forty million American women currently in the workforce. Ward might be dealing with pregnant employees wanting information about maternity leaves, job sharing or the child care tax credit. Unfortunately many American employers are as prepared--and perhaps willing--to deal with these issues as Mr. Cleaver might be.

This chapter will provide you with information regarding preparation for a leave following your baby's birth. Maternity leaves and the Pregnancy Disability Act will be addressed. A worksheet to help you negotiate and plan your specific leave is included. Information on the even more elusive paternity leave is provided. Finally, suggestions are offered for making the most of your leave time.

The Pregnancy Disability Act:

Is this maternity leave in disguise?

Maternity leave is a term bandied about by most pregnant women to describe the time they'll be taking off from work after (and in some cases before) their baby is born. Your company may offer a

three month leave; a friend tells you her company's policy provides for a six week leave of absence. Further discussion reveals that only the first six weeks of your leave is paid; the same holds true for your friend. She could apply for additional leave time, but then wouldn't be guaranteed her same job upon returning. (You hadn't considered that.) Another friend doesn't even have six weeks. Her "maternity" leave consists of accrued vacation and sick time, all of which will be paid.

Now the question is: which of you has a bona fide maternity leave? The answer: all of you, yet none of you. The reason: the United States is the only major industrialized nation that does not have a uniformly defined and legislated maternity leave. Why our country doesn't have such a policy is currently under discussion by many, including Dr. Sheila B. Kamerman of Columbia University. Dr. Kamerman feels the reason may lie in America's long standing protection of the individual's rights in contrast to many European nations who do consider childbirth and child care subjects of national concern. The most noteable of these countries is Sweden, which provides a nine month leave at ninety percent pay, job/position protection, and the right to work a six hour day until the child is eight.

Some protection for the pregnant American worker is provided through the Pregnancy Disability Act (PDA) of 1978. An extension of the Civil Rights Act, this law may, in fact, be your "maternity leave." The basic principle of PDA states that pregnant women must be treated the same as other job applicants or employees on the basis of ability or inability to work. Specific rights under PDA include:

1. All disability benefits, sick leave, health insurance coverage and any other fringe benefits must be made available on the same basis they are made available to other workers.
2. As a pregnant woman, you cannot be terminated or refused promotion solely because you are pregnant. (This also applies to hiring practices.)

3. Mandatory leaves set at arbitrary times in your pregnancy and not based on your individual inability to work are prohibited.
4. Your employer must hold open your job on the same basis jobs are held open for other temporarily disabled employees.
5. Your employer cannot credit time spent on pregnancy related disability leave differently from other disability leave in matters of vacation, pay increases, seniority credit, etc. Included are disability insurance, payment on insurance premiums, pension and profit sharing.

A pregnancy related disability is a medically certifiable condition that requires a written statement from your doctor or midwife stating the beginning and ending dates of the disability. The usual period of disability is six weeks, perhaps eight weeks if you have a cesarean birth. During this time period you are eligible for cash benefits, usually your salary or a percentage of it. Payment of insurance premiums may not be covered.

In strictest definition, then, a pregnancy related disability leave is not a maternity leave, nor is it a parental leave, a general leave or a child care leave. It is distinct from accrued sick leave or vacation time, and it does not automatically cover every pregnant employee. According to Dr. Kamerman, less than forty percent of American women workers have any leave coverage beyond their minimum sick leave. You are protected by PDA only if your workplace currently provides job and income protection for any disability and you have been paying disability insurance premiums. Only businesses of fifteen or more employees (plus all federal, state and local governments and educational institutions) are required by law to provide disability protection. Five states--California, New York, New Jersey, Hawaii, Rhode Island--and Puerto Rico have temporary disability programs that provide income replacement for both pregnancy and short-term disabilities. IF YOUR EMPLOYER IS NOT CURRENTLY PROVIDING DISABILITY COVERAGE, THEN S/HE IS NOT OBLIGATED TO INSTITUTE THIS BENEFIT.

There is hope on the horizon, however. Representative Patricia Schroeder (D-Colorado) recently introduced a bill requiring employers to provide parental leave in cases involving the birth, adoption, or serious illness of a child and temporary disability leave in cases involving inability to work due to nonoccupational medical reasons. H.R. 4300 and S. 2278, the Parental and Medical Leave Act, would require employers to provide a minimum of twenty six weeks leave for all employees who are temporarily unable to work due to short-term disability (such as pregnancy) with reinstatement to the same job upon their return. It also requires the employer to continue health insurance coverage and pre-leave benefit status (seniority, pension, etc.) through the leave period. For parental leaves, employers would be required to provide a minimum of eighteen weeks leave for any employee (mother or father) choosing to stay home to parent a newborn, newly adopted or seriously ill child. Reinstatement to the same job, continuance of health insurance coverage and pre-leave benefit status are mandated by this Act. This leave may be taken intermittently as necessary in the case of a sick child. For a parental leave, the eighteen weeks may be taken consecutively or on a reduced leave schedule, in which case the total period during which the eighteen work weeks may be taken cannot exceed thiry-six consecutive weeks. Such leave can be taken once every two years. As part of this legislation, a committee is set up to examine a paid parental leave policy. These bills were pending in Congress at the time of this book's publication - write your Representative and Senator to encourage their passage!

The following worksheet serves as a tool for documenting what your employer offers pregnant workers. It lists a number of factors that an extension of a six week disability leave may be dependent upon. Dad, use this checklist for your possible paternity/parental leave.

* * * * * *

Your Name_____Date_____

Benefits officer (union rep/personnel director)_____

Immediate supervisor_____

Your position_____

Dates of employment: starting_____leave begins_____

Current salary_____

Additional benefits: amount of sick leave_____

amount of vacation time_____

number of personal days_____

pension_____

other_____

Covered by PDA?_____

1. Does your employer offer any paid leaves?

   under what circumstances?

   for what period of time and what amount of pay?

   can you extend your six week leave* with a paid leave?

2. Does your employer offer any unpaid leaves?

   under what circumstances?

   for what period of time?

   can you extend your six week leave* with an unpaid leave?

3. Does your employer offer a maternity/paternity/parental leave?

   what are the criteria for taking this leave? (i.e. maximum amount of allowable leave; paid or unpaid)

4. Can you extend your leave by taking:

   accrued sick leave?

   accrued vacation time?

   personal days?

   are any/all of these paid? unpaid?

5. If you extend your leave by any means, which of the following are protected?

   job security salary

   seniority benefits

   right to return to same position you now hold

   right to return to a similar position

* if a six week leave (or any established policy) is offered

Knowing who to approach for this information, and when to approach this person, is an important first step. Having the above information readily at hand is strategic when negotiating leave with your boss. In many companies the personnel office will have a written description of your firm's leave policies, including maternity/paternity/parental leaves where applicable. In addition, a representative from personnel (or your union representative) should be able to provide you with any other information needed to complete your worksheet. When to approach is often a more sensitive issue than whom to approach. It's never too early to ascertain what your rights are, however. Today many couples strategically plan the timing of their pregnancy to coincide with career decisions such as promotions, transfers, job demands, etc. Part of good planning includes knowledge of leave policies. These have a major impact on negotiating time off, a change in job status, even a change in career. It's probably wise to obtain this information early on in your pregnancy.

Upon investigation you may find that your employer does not have specific maternity/parental leave policies, instead choosing to provide general leave and/or allowing individual supervisors and employees to negotiate specific leaves. Many leaves are at the boss's discretion and may deviate from stated company policy--for better or for worse. Expectant mothers working in the same major corporation, having basically the same position and same salary have ended up with remarkably different leaves. The difference stemmed from their immediate supervisor's attitudes toward maternity leaves.

How much leave to take?

One concern expressed by pregnant couples is not knowing how much leave time to take. (Some couples don't have the luxury of being able to negotiate leave; the amount of time is set and strictly adhered to within their company.) Six weeks away from work may sound like an eternity, especially if you're heavily involved with your job. Some people find themselves restless during a

week's vacation! You may want to read ahead in Chapter Two where issues relevant to making the working parent decision are discussed, as these topics are closely related. In this instance, experience has shown that many new parents are more likely to underestimate the amount of leave time they'll eventually want rather than to overestimate it. In negotiating any parental leave, "go for the gold." Get as much time as you possibly can, using whatever resources are at your disposal. Keep in mind the additional time will benefit not only you, but your baby as well.

In Chapter Two the "best" time to return to work is addressed. Child care experts profess a variety of opinions on this topic, ranging from four months to over three years. What makes this decision so complex is juggling the best interests of your baby and family with job considerations. The following sections of information are addressed particularly toward Mom, since it is most common for women to take extended maternity/parental/disability leaves. Where applicable, Dad, you may be able to use these suggestions in planning a parental or paternity leave.

Meg Wheatley and Marcie Schorr Hirsch, corporate and career consultants and authors of Managing Your Maternity Leave, define three primary factors to consider in leave taking. These are:

1. the nature of your organization. Some companies--and bosses-- are decidedly more supportive of new parent employees than others. In the 1986 Report on a National Study of Parental Leaves from Catalyst, a New York based career and family organization, over ninety percent of the 384 surveyed companies indicated they offered some form of paid disability leave. Such leave is applicable only to pregnant women. The Report also noted that written leave policy may not be communicated or used. Inadequate information about existing policy is often encountered by expectant parents. In certain cases, the written policy is superceded by leaves other new parents have actually negotiated. It is important to have a clear understanding of what the parental/disability leave policy of your firm is. Then, if appropriate, informally discuss extended leaves with those parents who have taken them and the supervisors who granted them. What factors were taken into

consideration? Are any of those applicable to your own situation? In certain cases, however, taking an extended leave can indeed be risky business. If your department is reorganizing or in the middle of a seasonal rush, additional leave may be damaging from a career standpoint. Finally, if you're one of the first in your company or division to negotiate a maternity/parental leave, do take this precedent setting action seriously. What you negotiate may become the basis of many leaves to follow.

2. the nature of your job. Now is an opportune time to take stock of your involvement in your job and your value to the company. Do you like your present position? Will the demands of your job be compounded by your new baby? Also, don't underestimate your value to the company. Is there anyone else who matches your expertise on the major and minor components of your position? Why would you be difficult to replace? Put such information in writing, both for your own benefit and potentially for your supervisor's.

3. personal factors. Some experts encourage delaying the announcement of your pregnancy for as long as possible, while others propose that your boss should be the first to know--after your spouse, that is. Somewhere in between is perhaps advisable. Should you experience morning sickness (which sometimes lasts all day) or extreme fatigue at the beginning of your pregnancy, it's better to inform your boss rather than having your news passed on to him/her via the office grapevine. On the other hand, you may feel comfortable keeping this private until a later date. Check company policy to see if you're required to file for a pregnancy related disability or maternity/parental leave by a certain date.

Timing the start of your leave is another matter for consideration. A "due date" is more like a "due month;" your baby may be born about two weeks before or two weeks after the actual due date. (One study showed that only four percent of the babies were born on their due dates!) While many women work right until labor begins, personal experience has shown that's probably not the best path to follow. The key word here is labor. Twelve to twenty (plus) hour labors are not uncommon for first time mothers. It's

called labor--not vacation--because giving birth is hard work. The last few weeks before your due date you'll be involved with many activities besides working. You'll be purchasing baby equipment, decorating the nursery, attending childbirth education classes, practicing breathing and relaxation techniques for labor, and reading child care books. Physically you're carrying around an additional twenty-five or more pounds, tiring more easily, experiencing heartburn, and/or having difficulty sleeping. Let's face it, you're just plain uncomfortable. (These time demands and physical symptoms are not the exclusive domain of Mom!) At work you may be completing a project, tying up loose ends, orienting a replacement, and/or leaving directions for co-workers. Once you have your baby, you don't have the five to seven day hospital stay for rest and relaxation to look forward to, as your mother did. Today some families opt for short stay maternity care, leaving the hospital twelve to forty-eight hours (in some cases even less) after giving birth. Nationwide the trend toward a two day hospital stay for new mothers is growing rapidly. Keeping these factors in mind, it makes sense to begin your leave about three weeks before your baby's anticipated birthday. If that's not possible, consider cutting back your work day (coming in later/leaving earlier), switching to part-time or working at home.

The drawback to beginning your leave three weeks before your due date is that you run the risk of using up much of your disability before giving birth. For as many babies that are born before their due date there are almost an equal number who arrive afterward. If at all possible, use unpaid leave or sick/vacation time for these weeks. Disability leave (and other parental leave) could then begin the day your baby is born.

It's a good idea to install an "in case I'm not here tomorrow" plan so that no matter when you begin your leave, the transition occurs with minimal disruption. This is important for fathers as well as mothers, since Dad will be accompanying Mom when she goes into labor and may be away from work for a period of time following your baby's birthday. About four to six weeks before your baby's due date, hire and/or orient your replacement, if there is to be

one. Keep co-workers informed of status on projects, where files are kept, who to contact, when completion dates are scheduled, etc. The names and phone numbers of people involved in upcoming meetings should be accessible to others at work so they can inform those people in case you're otherwise occupied when the meeting was scheduled. Written memos are valuable to your boss, co-workers, clients, and in the long run, to you. Babies don't always keep their parents' work schedules in mind when timing their arrival, so it makes sense to be prepared for all eventualities. Knowing that everything is fairly settled on the work front can help you approach the impending birth day with a certain peace of mind.

As for length of leave, again consider negotiating the maximum amount of leave time possible. In his book Working and Caring, pediatrician T. Berry Brazelton recommends a minimum four month leave for new mothers. Other child care experts, notably Burton L. White, would advocate an even longer period of leave than that. Realistically, what you would prefer for length of leave and what you can in fact negotiate may be two different things. At this point you may not be able to fathom what being away from work more than a week would be like! The thought of being at home all day may indeed seem rather foreign. While you may have fears of developing "cabin fever," remember that parenting is a new job and, as with any new job, it will take a few weeks simply to adjust. Being new parents is a consuming job on many levels. Some parents are amazed at how busy their baby kept them--and at how much they truly enjoyed that involvement. This is the inherent difficulty with negotiating for a leave before your baby is born. Even if you've had lots of prior practice with babies, the baby hasn't been yours nor has it been a twenty-four hour, seven day a week committment. The first week at home with Molly, my oldest, was literally as exhausting as any work week had ever been. On Friday evening it dawned on me that I didn't have the luxury of sleeping in on Saturday morning any more! While negotiating, you might inquire as to the possibilties of both extending and cutting short your leave. In some cases an extension is difficult to acquire while your company may gladly welcome you back earlier than

anticipated.

Negotiating your leave

As you plan a negotiating strategy, one valuable suggestion is to set up a win/win situation for both you and your employer. It is incumbent on you to show your supervisor how the leave time will be beneficial to the company as well as to you. Know what your boss's expectations are and how they compare with yours. S/he may have unspoken fears about your taking a leave, including a concern that you may not return. Your approach in negotiating should be positive and reasonable, not demanding. Keep in mind being your own best advocate, especially if you are proposing a leave that varies from company policy or is innovative in other ways. Be certain to approach your supervisor well in advance of your due date, perhaps having your leave negotiated by the beginning of your seventh month of pregnancy.

Wheatley and Hirsch offer two additional suggestions concerning leave negotiation: get everything in writing and don't burn any bridges behind you. Items listed on the worksheet--amount of leave, paid and unpaid portions, job/position security, salary, seniority, insurance or pension co-payments--should be spelled out, with signed copies retained by both you and your boss. You may also want to have one kept in your personnel files. Include the company's expectations of you before, during and after your leave. If you are being replaced during this period, set written terms with your replacement. Do you want to be consulted for specific projects? Are there some clients you need to keep in contact with? What are your expectations when you return?

Should your leave plans not materialize as you'd hoped, and you have pursued alternate plans B through Z, the best approach is to take whatever leave you do have, deferring any other decisions until your leave ends. At the end of pregnancy many women find their emotional state is not optimal for dealing with disappointment. You may find yourself in a better position from a number of standpoints to negotiate additional time as your leave

comes to an end. If, for whatever reasons, you do plan to resign at this time or following your baby's birth, make certain your boss learns about it from you first.

The final consideration in leave negotiating is your plans for when you do return to work. If you anticipate returning to your position status quo, make that clear to your supervisor. However, if you are considering a change in your job status (for example to part-time), this needs to be discussed now and terms for that employment carefully defined. Chapter Two examines the various options to working full-time. You may also wish to discuss a gradual return to work following your leave. "Not the smartest thing I've ever done" is the way one new mother described her experience in returning to a full forty hour work week immediately after her eight week maternity leave. How long you can work less than full time is a matter that should be negotiated now. Two weeks or more would be most advantageous to a smooth transition back to work. There are a number of ways a gradual return can be enacted. Some new parents choose to work shorter hours each day by delaying the start of their work day, ending it early, or both. Others negotiate returning on a less than five day work week: half-days and two/three days a week are some examples. This option is certainly open to fathers as well as mothers. It makes sense for Dad to gradually build into working parenthood, too! Some fathers opt to decrease their hours temporarily when their spouse returns to work.

Paternity leave: fathers in the forefront

The Catalyst Report indicated that over one-third of surveyed companies offered new fathers an unpaid leave, often covered under the general personal leave or leave of absence policies as opposed to a specific paternity/parental leave. The Report also indicated that very few fathers took advantage of parental leave. For many families financial constraints prevent unpaid dual leave taking. In today's workplace, fathers exercising parental leave rights are not the norm. Leave taking in general is discouraged. Supervisors

have trouble seeing the male employee who chooses to remain at home with his child as a serious, career and company oriented worker. (The same holds true for many female employees.) "It's just not a man's job in the male dominated business world," one dad relayed. "Legally my firm couldn't fire me for taking a paternity leave, but doing so would be professional suicide."

New fathers find that the new baby directly affects how and when they work. Calling home more often during the day to check on the baby is commonplace. You may be hesitant to work overtime or travel since it keeps you away from home. You're less likely to empty your briefcase in the evenings, opting to rock, bathe or hold your child instead. You may be sharing the middle of the night feeding, especially if your wife has already returned to work. Weekends are strictly family time, set aside for household chores, shopping, buggy walks, etc. These are physically and emotionally demanding tasks. No wonder both parents feel worn out!

The above are among many good reasons for taking any amount of paternity/parental leave. It provides you, your wife and your baby precious time to establish your family. By sharing the responsibilities of home and infant, you're making the transition into working parenthood a smoother process. Being home with the baby establishes confidence in a wide range of parenting skills and builds self esteem in all family members. On a more practical note, if you're considering a job or career change, such a leave may present the ideal opportunity to pursue this.

As previously noted, paternity leaves are not "the done thing" in today's society. Debate surrounding the issue of both maternity and paternity leaves is continuing. Who takes a leave and for how long may be mandated by any number of circumstances over which you have little or no control. What you want to do and what in reality you end up doing could very well be two entirely different things. In the long run what's important is that leave taking becomes a family made and family supported decision. Mom will need physical and psychological assistance from Dad if she is making multiple transitions from working woman to mother to non-working (outside the home, that is) woman back to working parent. Friends and

family may look on aghast when you confide your plans for Dad to take a paternity/parental leave. Needless to say he'll need your visible expressions of support, Mom. Be a father in the forefront. After Bridget was born, Dan worked at home on his portable computer for a week. It would have been nice having him around much longer!

Making the most of your leave

Whether your leave is six weeks or six months, mother only or a combination of a two parent leave, you'll want to make the most of this period. The following suggestions are built around the concept that the single most important factor is to make the most of is: time.

What you do before your leave begins will enable you to spend more time with your baby during your leave. First, complete preliminary investigation of your child care arrangements. (See Chapter Four for a complete discussion of day care.) This will involve deciding what type of care you'll want for your baby, visitng various centers and homes, perhaps even firming an agreement with a provider. The investigation and interview process requires a substantial time investment. Leaving this for completion during your leave may be too demanding, both physically and emotionally. Don't wait until your second due date--the day you return to work--is looming large on the horizon to start the day care decision process.

In the past it was common for the new Grandma(s) to help out following baby's birth. Many times she moved in for a couple weeks, cooking, cleaning and watching the baby while Mom napped. With many of today's Grandmas in the work force themselves this help is less available. But since you are using your leave primarily for baby centered activities, added help around the house is not a luxury, but a necessity. Often Dad takes his vacation (or his paternity/parental leave) during this time. Even so, don't overlook asking Grandma or another family member/friend to help out as well. (I know two very special Grandmas who scheduled their vacations to be with their newest grandchild!) Successful help

comes in the form of someone you both feel comfortable with, so do choose a person whose company as well as assistance you'd enjoy. Friends and co-workers may currently be offering help for after the baby's arrival. Take advantage of this by lining up people for specific tasks. Following your baby's birth friends and relatives can be invited over to see your baby at the same time you call in the marker for a dinner, help with housecleaning or an afternoon of adult companionship.

Keeping change to a minimum is the third suggestion. This applies both at home and the workplace. If at all possible delay moving or any major remodelling for at least three-six months after your baby is born. Don't change jobs, begin a major project or substantial job revision. Instead, devote the time and energy such projects would require to your newest family member.

"No." If there's one word you should learn to say during your leave, this is it. Don't feel obligated to have everyone over to see the new baby, even though you're bursting with pride and would dearly love to show her off. This is not the time to begin involvements in new activities, unless you really want to. Remember that you're only going to be home a short while. This is especially applicable to "distress calls" from the office.

The fifth suggestion regards taking care of yourself. As a childbirth educator I inevitably advise, "Nap when the baby naps." These are pearls of wisdom for parents on leave. Maintain good nutritional habits; if you're nursing, Mom, your daily caloric and nutritional requirements exceed those of pregnancy. Inadequate nutrition and inadquate amounts of sleep can be a deadly combination. Being run down increases susceptibility to illness. You don't want to spend the majority of your leave with a cold or flu. Mom, you are recuperating from labor and birth so some self-indulgence (and being indulged) are in order.

Moving back into the workplace

It doesn't seem to matter much whether Mom is on leave for six weeks or six months; there is a rather large adjustment that you

all make when she returns to work. Some parents refer to this as the second (or an extended) postpartum. Those first few weeks may seem especially full and hectic. Not surprisingly, this is also a period when a number of working families throw in the towel, feeling they are unable to balance the demands of work, home and family. In fact they feel quite sure they never will be successful at this. That's what the remainder of this book is about: ways to help you deal with these transitions and demands. At this point, though, it's helpful to examine some concrete ways you can make the initial move from home to the workplace a little less stressful.

First, plan to make the final two weeks you're home on leave as "easy" as possible. Hopefully your day care will already be in place. If not, it is mandatory you confirm those arrangements NOW (which is not always easy or stress-less). Don't use this time to do a final major housecleaning or decorating project, thinking you won't have the opportunity to do these things once you're back to work. You are right --you probably won't have the opportunity--but unless this will make you all extremely happy, let it go and spend the time with your baby.

Now is also a good time to put into effect all the ways you're planning to cut back on housework, meal preparation, etc. Many of the tips you've perhaps garnered in your childbirth preparation classes regarding postpartum are helpful here. Make double batches of meals to freeze for later use. In terms of housekeeping, try a dry run to help you determine the "messiness level" you can live with. If you're revamping how you share child care and home duties, have those jobs take effect during these final weeks at home. You'll then be accustomed to the new roles, which should help make for smooth transitions.

Try out your day care situation at least twice before you return to work. You may have to negotiate some special circumstances, but most day care providers appreciate the opportunity to get a headstart in knowing you and your baby. Use this time to treat yourself, Mom. Take the morning/afternoon and do a few things for yourself that you haven't had much opportunity to do since the baby was born. Now is a good time for a little

indulgence for both parents.

You may have been in contact with your boss or co-workers at various times during your leave. If not, touch base at this point to determine what you'll need to know when you return. The less swamped you feel during those first few days/weeks back at work, the easier your transition may be. It may be useful to spend some time in the office or workplace, re-acclimating yourself and putting yourself in a position to move ahead rather than spend an inordinate amount of time catching up.

A trip through your closet may also be in order at this point, Mom. Remember that it is the exceptional new mother who can fit into her pre-pregnant clothes after six to eight weeks. You may have lost some of the weight gained during pregnancy, but your pelvic bones did some shifting to accomodate the baby and they may not have returned to normal placement. Also if you're nursing, your breasts are larger than they were prior to your baby's birth. Before your body regains its pre-pregnant shape, you may need some clothes to wear to work! Check the clothes you wore early in your pregnancy to see if they'll be suitable for this transition period. Belting a jumper or wearing an elastic-bottomed top with slacks can make your pregnancy wardrobe do double duty. You may want to check with a friend or relative who is a size (or two) larger than you to establish a temporary lend-lease program. I was able to do this with my sister who was just moving into maternity clothes as I was going back to work; we enjoyed switching wardrobes for awhile. Second-hand or consignment shops are good places to make inexpensive purchases. If you're not planning on using your maternity clothing again, consider putting those items in a consignment store and using the profits to buy transitional clothing.

The first few weeks back to work are a nice time to have extra help at home. Dad might want to consider this and in place of taking his entire leave/vacation when your baby first arrives, he can take part of it during the first days or weeks when Mom returns to work. Tap someone who volunteered to help out after your baby was born and never had the opportunity or, if your baby hasn't

arrived yet, set someone aside now for this activity. You might want to consider having a helpful person just twice a day: during the time you're getting ready for work and then again right before you arrive home in the evening.

It's not uncommon for new parents to feel as if they're jumping from "the frying pan into the fire" when they return to work. In essence that's just what you're doing when you go from your full-time job at home to your full-time job at work. There are a few ways you might make the transition somewhat less stressful, depending on your own particular work situations. First, consider a less than full time return for at least the first two to three weeks you're back to work. This is something both Mom and Dad can combine, as was mentioned earlier in this chapter. Second, confine your working to contracted hours. If at all possible, try to eliminate any travelling during this period of time. Chapter Five on time and energy management expands on some of these ideas.

Bottled time

Very few of the new parents I've worked with have felt their leave time was long enough. The "to-do" lists somehow seemed to get longer rather than shorter. Each day with the baby became easier and more enjoyable as the family developed its own special relationship. The jobs they had been so involved with took a back seat to this new person. Yet when the time came, these parents made a successful transition into working parenthood and are now back to work. Planning for parental leave and then using it to its best advantage helped in making this lifestyle change. Doing the same will prove beneficial for you!

CHAPTER TWO

To Work or Not to Work

For many new parents, "To work or not to work" is no less a question than "To be or not to be" was for Hamlet. Until recently most of society - and probably your relatives - expected the new mother to forsake job or career and remain at home with her baby, at least until the infant was school-aged. It was virtually unheard of for the new father to take a paternity leave in order to care for his baby. How times have changed, and thank goodness for that you say! Over half of the mothers in the United States working outside their homes have preschool aged children. A recent national survey indicated that the majority of new mothers return to work within the first six months of their babies' lives (not always through their own choice, however, as discussed in the previous chapter). And it is becoming more commonplace for new fathers to take time off following their babies' birth.

The decision regarding a return to work after your baby's birth is a complex one, influenced by a wide range of factors. Regardless of your particular situation, it is important to truly make the decision about returning to work. This chapter will deal with the complicated issues involved in making that working parent decision. Factors presented include:

* why making the decision is crucial
* the difference between decisions and assumptions
* considerations that will influence your decision making (i.e. your baby, your own needs, financial matters)
* the elusive "best time" to return to work.

Make the decision

In the childbirth education classes I teach, I often offer a mini-seminar on going back to work. While class participants usually express great interest in the topic, few couples actually attend this session. The reason may be psychological readiness to

deal with this concept. Expectant parents are often more concerned with the immediate task at hand - getting the baby born - than postpartum issues. However, it's a different story at class reunions held two to three months after the babies are born. Invariably the topic at hand is going back to work. While many parents had indeed decided they'd be returning to work even before they left their jobs, it is only now, with that return date looming large on the horizon, that concerns begin to surface. The talk is full of "I wish I had thought of that" or "I wish I had known."

Using the decision making process provides you some distinct advantages over your counterparts who will "fall into" the same decision. As decision makers, you'll both be more realistic in your perceptions of what being working parents will require of you and your family. You may harbor fewer illusions about time and energy demands. As new parents, you are then better able to establish realistic priorities for work and home rather than struggling to maintain pre-baby status quo. It is possible to avoid the "Supermom and Superdad Syndrome." While feeling guilty is still common (we could use a vaccine against guilt feelings), it doesn't consume you. The decision making process does not alleviate all of the problems common to working parents, but it can help minimize them. The process comes with no guarantees, no promises that there won't be difficulties along the way. However, it does provide you with a tool that can give you some peace of mind.

Decision making vs. assumptions

"Mom and Dad Go Back to Work" is the class I teach for expectant and new parents who plan to return to work following their baby's birth. For the most part, the couples who attend this class have decided they will both be going back to work. But one of the first discussions we have in class is about the decision making process, and often couples find there are many issues involved that they hadn't addressed. What they have done, basically, is worked on the assumption that both Mom and Dad will

become working parents. They haven't actually made a firm, committed decision, which is preferable to an assumption for a number of reasons.

1. Assumptions aren't always based on accurate information. Many of the expectant mothers in the Mom and Dad class (and in other classes and seminars I teach) are unsure about their company's leave policies and how much leave they are entitled to.
2. Assumptions don't account for multiple pieces of information.
3. They tend to be short-sighted and narrow in scope. Sometimes expectant parents can easily verbalize their own needs, but have difficulty incorporating the needs of their yet-to-be-born baby.
4. Assumptions are often made quickly, without careful consideration. One expectant mother said she made her "decision" when asked by a fellow worker if she would be coming back to work post-baby. "It didn't dawn on me I should discuss this with a number of people, most notably my husband. I just said `Of course.'"
5. In this case the same assumption is made by two people - Mom and Dad - but often without in depth consultation. (See above comment.)

Decision making, on the other hand, requires a great deal of those involved. The first step, then, is for you to gather information as the basis for making a decision. Talk to other parents who are doing both - working or staying at home (which, by the way, is working!). You may find yourselves striking up conversations with anyone and everyone who has an infant. Co-workers in similar situations can be valuable resources. They are in the thick of things and can present some realistic assessments of what it's like to be a working parent.

If you're currently attending childbirth preparation classes, talk to your instructor about facilitating an information and

support group for parents who return to work. Mention the idea in class to determine if there's interest. (Don't be surprised if you're overwhelmed by the response - "YES!") Your instructor may also have access to additional resources or be willing to organize groups in conjunction with other childbirth education classes. In addition, many communities offer new parent or postpartum support groups. Some have organized programs, such as those developed by MELD (Minnesota Early Learning Design, Minneapolis) or COPE (Coping with the Overall Pregnancy/Postpartum Experience, Boston). Early childhood family education (ECFE) programs have a component specifically for parents with infants. [See the reference list in Appendix Two for the addresses of these and other programs.] Other classes meet in church basements, recreation centers or through hospitals. More and more these programs are being offered in the evenings to better fit the schedule demands of working parents.

A second resource is print material. Parenting and women's magazines often feature articles on working parents, especially working mothers, as well as those remaining at home. The reading list in Appendix One references a number of current books and magazines that address working parent issues.

Once you've developed a good base of information, the next step in the decision making process is to define the factors that will be involved. What you'll be working toward is pulling together enough information for a needs assessment.

Factors involved in the decision

According to Professor Sheila Kamerman of Columbia University, many books on maternal employment hold the implicit assumption that it's bad, and then proceed to document that it's bad. While the situation is changing, studies on this subject have been more ideological than sociological. What this means to you as new parents is that no one has yet proven that your working is harmful to your baby. No one has yet proven it's really beneficial to your child, either.

Because of the unique nature of individuals, child care

experts all ascribe to various theories. As parents, we can pick and choose which ones seem right for us and our children at any given time. Unfortunately multiple opinions aren't always helpful when you're looking for specifics to aid in making the working parent decision. What you read in one book can be directly contradicted by the equally learned statments in a second resource. This can be anxiety raising, especially to first time parents. In looking over the available research, a number of considerations do appear over and over again, so they are listed here. They aren't meant to be prescriptive or definitive, however. You and your baby will have very individual concerns. However, the factors listed below appear to be universal.

*Your baby and his needs. It is undeniable that babies have very specific needs. They run from the mundane (changing diapers) to the marvelous (eliciting smiles). It is also an undeniable fact that those needs must be taken care of. It is NOT an undeniable fact that the only people who can do this are the baby's parents.

Caregiver, as it is applied to babies, may not be a familiar term. It is loosely applied to anyone who takes care of your baby: yourselves, grandparents, the next door neighbor or a day care provider. While your infant can have a number of people providing care for her, your baby does need primary or major caregivers in her life. That will (and should) be you. It is important your child learn that her parents will always be there to take care of her, love her, and provide her with security. Being your baby's major caregivers lays the foundation for the trust relationship you want to build with your child.

How can any one set of parents do that? It certainly sounds like an overwhelming task and very well may be one! Part of the answer lies in defining the "care" in caregiver. Beside considering what you feel are the most important factors, keep in mind these documented universal specifics that all infants need:

- love
- warmth and comfort (both physical and emotional)
- constancy and predictability in relationships with adults
- developmentally appropriate experiences

There is truth in the maxim, "Nobody loves your baby like you do" and that has provided some solace to me as a working mother. All my children's caregivers are loving people and I believe my children are better individuals from their experiences with them. Yet I have never felt as if they love my babies better than my husband Dan and I do. It`s comforting to know that when we leave the kids, our caregivers truly care for them.

Babies learn about the world around them based on how their needs are met. Here needs are defined in terms of warmth and security, not simply changing and feeding. The infant whose caregivers rock and cuddle him senses there are many positive aspects in his environment. He can attach to the adults around him and develop a sense of security. One recent study showed that being in a loving day care atmosphere actually helped improve the relationship between a troubled mother and her infant.

Selma Fraiberg, author of The Magic Years, writes that children of all ages need stability, continuity and predictability in their relationships and attachments for the fullest realization of their humanity. As your infant comes to rely on his caregivers, he needs to know that those people will always be available. The fact that the caregiver responds in a predictable fashion encourages him to reach out to the world. Even newborns develop a series of cries that specifically call their parents. They seem to know which cry will get immediate action and which won't. Now that's relying on the predictability of parents!

It`s important to realize early on that there are many different ways of doing things "properly" regarding childrearing. This is perhaps one of the reasons why being a parent is such a difficult job. What is effective with your baby may not work with your friend's infant and vice versa. Appropriate methods of parenting are based on a number of factors, all specific to your own family's considerations. It might be nice if you could put all the relevant factors regarding your son or daughter into a computer, which would then tell you what to do in the wide spectrum of situations you'll be facing over the next eighteen plus years.

Perhaps fortunately it doesn't work that way; the human element remains crucial. Knowing your baby is what's important - and then responding to her specific needs. Chapter Six contains further discussion about being new parents.

*You - the parents - and your needs. One of your needs, to establish yourselves as major caregivers in your baby's life, has just been emphasized. Obviously this requires time since you not only take care of her physical needs, but establish emotional bonds as well. Each parent finds and uses this time differently. Some period of leave time following your baby's birth can be extremely valuable for this purpose. While many fathers are unable to take such extended leave, they do find ways of establishing their own special involvement with their baby. For example, Dad can take over from Mom when he arrives home from work and on weekends. The early weeks and months are intense on a number of levels, so setting aside time primarily for getting to know your baby is important. The parent-child relationship doesn't happen magically nor does it happen overnight. There are many who feel it is a life-long challenge.

The crux of making the "to work or not to work" decision may lie here, with your needs. The following worksheets provide the basis for making a needs assessment. Information from these worksheets can be kept in your notebook, since I do suggest coming back to this needs assessment on a regular basis. Unless otherwise specified, each parent should separately fill out each worksheet.

* * * * *

WORKSHEET #1 - WHY DO I WORK?

DIRECTIONS: On a separate sheet of paper, answer each of the following questions. (A section "For Additional Information" follows the questions; you might want to read that before answering.) If you choose, answer only those that seem particularly relevant to your situation.

1. Why do I work?

2. Do I like my job? If so, list the reasons why. If not, list the reasons that contribute to job dissatisfaction.

3. Given the choice to either stay home or return to work:

   - why would you decide to stay home with your baby?

   - why would you decide to return to work?

4. Are there options to your present work situation that might be available upon your return to work?

5. If we both return to work, how might our lives change? List considerations you'll need to make that currently aren't important or relevant.

"WHY DO I WORK?" - for additional information

Question One: This may seem like a simple question, but answers often end up being quite complex. Most people do work for more than a paycheck as a reward. As a thought provoker, consider what you would (or could) be doing if you didn't work. How would your lives be different if you weren't employed? In addition, keep in mind that working without a baby is quite a bit different from being a working parent. Life will become more complex once your baby arrives, and working may also become more complicated.

Question Two: Focus on your particular job, the place you work, the people you work for and with. How do they contribute to satisfaction or dissatisfaction with your position? If you like your job, you're a step ahead in becoming a working parent since this personal satisfaction is a positive influence on your parenting abilities. However, job dissatisfaction can complicate both your lives. While having a new baby is a decided joy, it is also an added stress on your family. Combining this and job dissatisfaction is a monumental load. Taking a parental leave can give you some needed distance from the workplace and a different perspective about your job.

Question Three: You should be able to tell yourself and your spouse why it is you would choose to stay home or return to work. Keep a running list of reasons. They may be simple (we need the money) or complex (my staying home would be beneficial to our entire family because...). FATHERS CAN CHOOSE TO REMAIN HOME!

Question Four: Consider these alternatives:

* Find a fellow employee who is also a working parent and has similar interests and expertise in your company. Develop a job sharing plan and schedule that concisely spells out how you would handle the shared position (responsibilities, hours, salary, benefits, etc.). Have a co-worker look at your plan and "troubleshoot" by raising points you may have overlooked. Next, meet with your immediate supervisor to present your plan. Don't be afraid to be ice-breakers! This holds true for developing part-time and flex-time programs as well.
* Bring your baby to work with you. A small number of new

mothers are choosing this option for a variety of reasons. Bringing your baby to work usually requires that you have a cooperative infant and even more cooperative and supportive workplace. Once your baby becomes mobile or remains awake for longer periods during the day, this situation may have to end. One mother told me she felt the entire office atmosphere took on a much more positive outlook while her son was there!

* Look at building benefits for working parents into your contract. Some coporations now present their employees with "cafeteria style" benefits where employees are free to choose from a variety of benefits designed to best meet their needs. Each employee works from a fixed benefit dollar amount. Many employers prefer this plan as it can offer something to every employee, not just working parents. Chapter Four has more on this option.

Question Five: Unless you've already returned to work, it's nearly impossible to accurately describe how your lives will change. Suffice it to say there will be many changes made! The readjustment process has been nothing short of traumatic for some new working parents. Others dealt with what they considered minor "glitches" quite successfully. Again, talking to a number of working parents in a variety of situations, as well as couples where one parent is remaining at home, most certainly will be helpful.

* * * * *

MOM'S WORKSHEET #2 - POSITIVES AND NEGATIVES

Directions: on a separate sheet of paper,

1. list 5 positives about returning to work
2. list 5 negatives about returning to work
3. list 5 positives about staying home with your baby
4. list 5 negatives about staying home with your baby

DAD'S WORKSHEET #2 - POSITIVES AND NEGATIVES

Directions: on a separate sheet of paper,

1. list 5 positives about your wife's returning to work
2. list 5 negatives about your wife's returning to work
3. list 5 positives about your wife's staying home with your baby
4. list 5 negatives about your wife's staying home with your baby

NOTE FOR BOTH WORKSHEETS: 5 is an arbitrary number. Feel free to list more or less as appropriate.

The purpose of this second worksheet is to have you outline both the possible joys as well as possible concerns related to staying home and returning to work. It's important to be honest here, listing various things that perhaps you've thought about but haven't shared with your partner. One expectant mother indicated that this worksheet gave her the opportunity to consider her options in a positive light. She and her husband had been so concerned about the potential problems, they hadn't allowed themselves an opportunity to examine how working and/or staying home might have some positive effects on their family.

* * * * *

WORKSHEET #3

FINANCIAL WORKSHEET FOR WORKING PARENTS

Directions: Determine whose income is the second income. This is usually the person who might otherwise remain at home with the baby. Then fill out the following chart for that income:

GROSS (BI)WEEKLY SALARY _____

DEDUCT

Social Security	_____	
Federal Income Tax	_____	
State and other taxes	_____	
Insurance/pension/etc.	_____	
Transportation costs	_____	*
Work clothing	_____	**
Lunches	_____	@
Misc. working expenses	_____	!
Additional household expenses	_____	#
Compensation expenses	_____	+
Child care costs	_____	$
TOTAL EXPENSES	_____	

SUBTRACT TOTAL EXPENSES _____

BALANCE _____

* This should include bus fare, taxi fare or gas and car care maintenance and expenses. Include insurance and car payments if a second car is mandated by the second income.

** If Mom is returning to work, her wardrobe will probably require

some updating following pregnancy. Depending on her occupation, her work wardrobe may be more costly to maintain and replace than an at-home wardrobe would be. Include charges for dry cleaning, uniform purchases, etc.

@ Eating lunches out - minimum of $10/week.

! This is also known an "pocket money" for work related expenses, such as the coffee and birthday funds, special lunches out, buying from a variety of catalogs that make the rounds at work, etc. $10/week, minimum.

Working parents often spend more on dinners at restaurants, convenience foods, fast foods, etc. which adds to the family food budget. Include here the cost of having your house cleaned, lawn and garden services, etc. if you use them primarily because you're both working. $10/week, minimum.

+ These are expenditures on items you use to "compensate" yourself or your family because you're working. These are the little things bought while out on your lunch hour that aren't absolute line-items in the budget. All of us do this, then wonder where the money went! $5/week, at the least.

$ Include in here not only the cost of day care for your baby (anywhere from $50-$100+ for a 40 hr. week), but also the cost of disposable diapers (if you'd otherwise use cloth) and formula (if you'd otherwise be primarily nursing). These can be upwards of $15/week.

Two final considerations: what tax bracket does the second income put you into and how much can you expect to deduct through the Child Care tax credit? Based on a family of 3 with typical itemized deductions, the following table gives you some idea of what the second income is actually worth after taxes.

If first salary is:	$25,000	$35,000	$40,000	$50,000
a second salary of:				
$15,000 equals	$11,012	$10,918	$10,732	$ 9,350
25,000 equals	18,195	17,493	16,503	15,948
30,000 equals	21,773	20,267	19,250	18,623
40,000 equals	27,573	26,893	25,805	24,966

(SOURCE: Mpls-St.Paul Magazine, May 1985)

The Child Care tax credit is dependent upon the amount of money you make and the amount spent on child care. It can save you up to $480 per year for one child. With the advent of new tax laws, it is adviseable to consult a tax accountant for information specific to your situation.

Some questions and answers as you consider still more factors. . .

As mothers and fathers of babies, you are forging new ground in the working parent world. The statistical evidence regarding infants of working parents is sparce. Child care books still devote only a small amount of space to you and your contemporaries. Yet the questions you have are extremely valid and deserve to be addressed.

*Will both parents working harm our baby? As previously mentioned, no solid evidence exists to prove that it will - or that it won't. The research emphasis has been, and continues to be, on the working mother rather than the working family or the working father. Mary Howell, pediatrician and contributor to Working Mother magazine, writes that the emotional problems of children have been found repeatedly to be related not to the mother's employment but to her own emotional state. If you're happy doing what you're doing, you're understandably in a better position to raise a healthy child. Niki Scott, author of The Balancing Act, states that although innumerable studies have been conducted on children of working mothers, not one has ever proven that working has any effect whatsoever on a mother's chances of rearing a well adjusted human being. It's important to emphasize here that fathers are an equally important contributor to the child rearing process.

*If Mom (or Dad) stays home, will it be better for our baby? This viewpoint is held and argued by a number of child care experts who believe that a mother should remain home with her baby until that child is at least three. Many of our society's traditional models would answer the above question in the affirmative, using the theory that the way it used to be is the way it's supposed to be. Much research on the "new" working family (working mothers [and dads] with infants) is currently taking place. Some current information has shown that mothers who work outside their homes spend as much direct contact time with their children as do mothers who are at home all day. Obviously there is no clear cut answer to

these two questions.

*Will we feel guilty about leaving our baby when we return to work? It would be nice to answer maybe yes and maybe no, but experience has shown otherwise. Feeling guilty, on some level and to some degree, is inevitable. We have been raised in a culture mired in the "cult of domesticity." Women were taught their place was in the home, with a husband as sole support of the family. Conflicts with this theory rose in the '60's and `70`s with the onset of women's liberation and the concept that a woman's place is where she wants to be. But many professional women still fundamentally believe that children are better off if their own mothers care for them, and that successful motherhood is a full-time job, according to Roland and Harris in Careers and Motherhood: Struggles for a New Identity. Society is just beginning to change its expectations of a full-time committment from its mothers so that women can function in a variety of roles. The current cost of living often demands that both parents contribute to the family income. Thousands of families are experiencing all kinds of role juggling; many are doing it well. Knowing all that intellectually, however, may not ease the guilt feelings or make them any easier to contend with. Recognize that what seems most important is that you and your family are comfortable with your choices and your circumstances.

*How can we know ahead of time whether or not we'll like having us both back to work? The truth of the matter is ... you probably can't. As you saw with the "Why Do I Work" worksheet, being on the job is a decidedly complex matter. If you do like working now, this should continue although circumstances will be different once you return. If you don't, chances are you may like working even less when you return. Some new parents find their entire perspective about working changes onces they have a baby. Work was their major focus pre-baby, with dinner conversations and socializing centered around what was happening at work. Many of these same couples find the big problems at work become minor details after a baby enters their lives. Depending on how long your leave is, you may not get a true picture of what staying at

home could be like and how you enjoy that, either.

*What is life like for the working father? Many new fathers find themselves experiencing emotional strains not unlike those their wives are dealing with. Unfortunately, not too many people ask you, Dad, how you're holding up or the effect being a working father is having on you! The first emotional strain felt by new fathers regards establishing that elusive but essential bond with your new baby. Your wife can stay home all day with your child (at least initially). But how can you get to know your baby? Being a working parent affords you many opportunities to develop the father-child relationship. Because you're both working, you may play a more active and significant role in your baby's care.

The second strain comes into play as you and your spouse make the working parent decision. You may be uncomfortable with her working once your baby is born, or worry that the financial strain on your family will be too great should she want to remain at home. Your support on the home front needs to be active and tangible, which might reduce the amount of time spent at your workplace. Conflict between the demands of these dual roles can surface in a number of ways. It's not uncommon to find yourself pulled in many directions during the transition into fatherhood.

*Where can we find support? There are many sociologists who decry the rise of the nuclear family--a unit of two or more, basically isolated from their extended family of relatives. This is a fairly unique American phenomena that has become more prevalent in the last ten years than at any other time in our history. In many other cultures parents, children, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins all live within short distances of each other. They are there to provide physical and moral support during times of change and crisis. Our way of life - constant motion - often prevents such extended family systems. However, there are a number of support systems new working parents can utilize. These include:

- your day care provider
- friends
- early childhood family education (ECFE) programs in school

districts
- park and recreation programs, YW and YMCA, hospitals, non-profit agencies, etc.
- family (as the phone people would encourage us, reach out and touch someone!)
- each other

Adding your baby

It's somewhat amazing that for all its sophistication and technical advancement, medical science cannot 100% accurately predict when a woman's labor will begin. There are signs that labor is impending, but as a childbirth educator--and mother of four--I've become acutely aware of the caprecious nature of labor. Various theories about the onset of labor have been advanced. One currently in favor holds that a change in the fetal hormones triggers the labor mechanisms. This is my personal favorite. It just goes to show you that each baby is an individual who can pull the strings, right from the start.

If you've already had your baby, you're no stranger to the fact that each child has his own personality. Some are content to eat and sleep--these are the "textbook" infants, the ones that sleep 18 hours a day. (None of my children had access to that book prior to their births; I desperately tried to swallow it during my third pregnancy.) Unfortunately not all infants fit this mold. Some babies will have colic; some will be cat-nappers; others will require that their internal time clocks be reset, as in 4:00 a.m. is not playtime. The baby who sleeps through the night at 10 days and naps 4 hours at a stretch (they do exist!) is the one many working parents hope for.

Some infants are extremely social beings who thoroughly enjoy the company of other children and adults. Other babies prefer Mother only, thank you; Dad will do in a pinch. There are babies who thrive on a day out and about, spending time in Mom's office, nursing contentedly under a blanket at a restaurant or running errands in the front pack. For other infants a quick errand with

Mom or Dad is courting disaster. The point to all these descriptions is: you can add up all the relevant factors, mutually arrive at what you feel is the best decision - and then have it be for naught because your baby can't (or won't) adapt. This is an appropriate spot to pitch flexibility.

Flexibility means not casting your decisions in stone. You do decide on a course of action and proceed accordingly, but if and when the situation warrants change, you are able to do so. Review your options at such times or create additional ones. Don't jump from the frying pan into the fire, however. If things aren't going according to plan A, readjust the plan rather than eliminating it. Then give the readjusted plan sufficient opportunity to work. Some working parents use the seasons as a time frame--try it this winter and re-evaluate in the spring.

The actual decision

At this point you may be feeling rather overwhelmed. By no stretch of the imagination is going back to work an easy decision, even when you find that the information you've gathered appears relatively simple. Consider the following suggestion as you approach making the decision.

First, pull together all the thoughts you've been sharing with each other, friends, family, internally and jot those down in your notebook. Complete the worksheets, if you haven't done so already. Underline or mark those factors listed in this chapter you find most relevant to your situation. Then devote an ample amount of time to the decision making process. Try a quiet dinner for two (or three, if your baby's already arrived), with no interruptions. Share the information you've jotted down and your additional thoughts. Be open minded to all possibilities, flexible enough to change positions midstream if evidence warrants a switch. And good luck!

Back to work - the elusive "best" time

For some new working parents, the best time to go back to work is synonymous with the day Mom's leave ends. Others have leeway in the amount of leave time they can negotiate. In both situations, your baby is the most important factor to keep in mind. She is going to adapt and accept certain situations in her own specific manner.

The emotional adjustments to parenthood are enormous. You are now giving birth to yourselves as a family and learning how to be parents. (Unless the situation has changed recently, babies don't come with personalized instruction manuals.) Relationships with each other, with your families and with friends may change. You now relate to each other not only on the husband-wife level, but on a parent to parent level as well. Remember that it took some time to adjust to the married state; adjusting to parenthood also requires time. You have brought a stranger into your home that you are expected to love, nurture and guide for the next 18+ years. Each of you is developing your own special interactions with the baby.

That developing relationship with your infant should be the central focus of your leave time and beyond. The first few weeks with a new baby are not always the most fulfilling for new parents. The novelty of changing diapers soon wears off. Your clothes emit the essence of eau de spit-up. As much as you might enjoy nursing/feeding your baby, you don't eagerly look forward to the 2 and 5 a.m. feedings. In return for all your attention, your baby may cry (and cry...and cry...).

After the first six to eight weeks, the situation changes somewhat. Your infant smiles purposefully; he coos and begins reaching out to you and the world around her. You may be down to one very business-like middle of the night feeding. Who notices what your clothing smells like? The mutual enjoyment for parents and baby develop in to a trusting, loving relationship. When you leave your baby, he feels secure in the knowledge that you'll be back. Pediatrician and author T. Berry Brazelton describes the stages of attachment that parent and infant go through during the first four months in his book Working and Caring.

Almost all babies develop separation anxiety between six and eighteen months of age. If this phenomenon occurs, it will happen independently of whether or not you return to work. Your baby may if you leave the room for the briefest of moments. She crawls or creeps after you, wailing and trailing tears. When you give her to another person, she clings tenaciously to you and protests the separation. One one hand this makes you feel pretty good; you must have done something right for your baby to have become so attached to you. On the other hand this can be upsetting. Some child care experts feel it is a good idea for your infant to become accustomed to having other caregivers during the first six months of life, before separation anxiety sets in. Doing so may lessen the severity of this phenomena if and when it occurs. These other caregivers can include babysitters, family and friends as well as day care providers. It has also been suggested that you return to work before separation anxiety can set in--or after it runs its course. However, if you are able to negotiate a leave of six months or more, Mom, please do take advantage of this leave time. From my viewpoint, the benefits of an extended leave far outweigh any problems you might encounter with separation anxiety.

Postpartum is technically defined in obstetrical texts as the six week period immediately following the birth of a baby. There are multitudes of mothers who claim it extends far beyond that - perhaps even until their child graduates from college. Keep in mind the adapting and adjusting you are doing physically and emotionally during these early weeks when considering your best time to return to work, Mom.

The physical adjustments following pregnancy do not happen automatically, nor do they occur overnight. Your abdomen may be distended and your waistline thickened. The extra pounds dubbed "nutritional stores" during pregnancy now look suspiciously like plain extra pounds. At the end of six weeks it is the exceptional new mother who has returned to her pre-pregnancy weight and is able to wear her non-maternity clothes comfortably. Nursing mothers may experience breast enlargement and leaking of breastmilk. In short, your body is learning that it isn't pregnant any more. Remember

that it took nine months for your body to reach "term;" it may take at least that long for it to return to "normal."

Sleep deprivation is a powerful force. It doesn't take long to find yourself feeling a little less than human when your sleep is continually interrupted. Our bodies and minds cannot function at maximum capacity over an extended period when we don't have sufficient sleep. Research is just beginning to examine the effects of sleep deprivation and its impact on the parent-child bonding process. When both parents are working, the need for sleep is crucial. (I think it's crucial even if both parents aren't working!) If your baby is a good sleeper this will present no problem. If she isn't, a small consolation is that eventually most babies sleep through the night. Three to six months is one time frame often mentioned.

Expecting any of this to happen in six weeks is ludicrous, therefore I am not a proponent of the six week pregnancy disability/maternity/parental leave. However, in many situations reality dictates such a leave. While only you can determine the "best" time to return to work, do give some thought to the following:

1. As encouraged in Chapter 1, negotiate for as much leave time as possible.

2. Where feasible, both of you can take leaves. Ideally Mom would take hers first; Dad's leave could overlap hers, then continue when she returns to work.

3. Investigate alternatives to both parents working full-time. These break down into the following categories:

   *Part-time. In its broadest definition, part-time employment is anything less than full-time hours. Various occupations have their own definitions of part-time, often based on the hours worked per pay period. The number of hours worked may also determine

what benefits, if any, the part-time worker is entitled to. The primary advantage of part-time employment is the ability to work outside of your home while having a larger block of time to spend at home with your baby. Disadvantages include how the workplace views part-time employees and their jobs (not always favorably); the decrease in income and benefits; the additional amount of time that must be worked in order to merit salary increases and benefits. For some, opting for part-time employment represents a negative change in work responsibilities and future advancement. Balancing this against the time that can be spent instead with the baby seems, for many, like a favorable trade off. The women (and the few men) who work part-time feel it provides them with the best of both worlds.

*Job sharing. The strict definition of job sharing is one position shared by two employees. Each employee is well versed in the entire function of the position and, between them, they work out details involved in sharing the responsibilities. Job sharing demands compatibility, excellent communication and, ultimately, trust in your co-worker's capabilities. Some jobs have greater flexibility than others and are more conducive to this type of arrangement. Benefit packages, including vacation and sick pay, are split between the two persons involved. Some creativity in this area can go a long way. Again, the primary advantage to this type of position is the ability to both work outside your home and spend at least equal amountsof time at home with your baby. Many of the disadvantages listed for part-time employment apply to job sharing, too. With both options many misconceptions remain in American industry; employers are often hesitant only because they have not had much experience with part-time and job-sharing. Studies have shown,in fact, that the less

than full-time employee who chooses that status is often more productive on the job than his/her full-time counterpart. When the choice is to lose a valued employee or explore an option to full-time, more companies may be encouraged to give these a try rather than take a loss in productivity while retraining another employee.

*Flex-time. The basic American workday is eight hours totalling forty hours a week. Flex-time (also called flexitime) enables the worker to schedule his/her starting and finishing times without being tied into the 9 to 5 routine. There are employees who prefer the flexibility of arriving early, thus being able to leave mid-afternoon. Such an option can cut down on day care costs if the other parent remains at home in the morning until the "regular" start of the workday. One drawback to flex-time is that the predominance of the work world, including co-workers, still function on the 9 to 5 schedule. They have difficulty leaving work for the flex-time worker to complete when she arrives at six or seven a.m.. When the flex-time employee is ready to leave at one p.m., there are still four or more hours remaining in the business day. A number of working parents on flex-time indicated they needed to work closely with their colleagues and convince them that their hours could in fact suit the rest of the working world's.

*Working at home. With the advent of home computers this is fast becoming a viable option, especially for employees in the high-tech field. Working at home requires a high degree of self-discipline. If your baby is not cooperative you may find it necessary to take him to day care for part of the day so you can complete your work. Otherwise, you'll be burning the midnight oil on

a regular basis to meet deadlines. Some new parents use this opportunity to develop their own home based businesses capitalizing on a variety of talents and interests. Women Working Home is a national organization providing information and support for women owned home based businesses. Their address is listed in Appendix Two.

As the traditional American workplace continues to change and adapt to the workforce that populates it, hopefully many of the above mentioned alternatives will become more commonplace. This will not happen without the impetus of working parents themselves. Children and family life are part of the deep seated tradition that we value dearly in this country. If we are to preserve that tradition we must speak out, initiate creativity in job structures, support change and become more demanding in the workplace.

4. Once more, fathers who are able to remain home for any period of time should do so.

5. Anything over twelve weeks is probably not a bad time to return, but my druthers would lean more toward four to six months. The additional time enables both parents to become better acquainted with your new baby and more comfortable with your new roles as parents. You will become more confident with how you handle him, confident in your ability to father and mother him. The love and trust relationship crucial to your infant's development will have that much more time to grow. As he begins to creep, crawl and sit up by himself, he becomes more of an individual and not quite so totally dependent upon you. A second reason is that is gives Mom some additional time to work on her self-image. Your clothes will begin to fit more comfortably (some of you may not have this problem); if

you're nursing you can adequately adjust your feeding schedule to best match your work schedule. Finally, by six months many babies do sleep through the night or are not awakening quite so many times.

On your way back to the office

Stanley Greenspan, M.D., author of First Feelings and writing in Working Mother indicates that rather than emphasizing the best time to return to work, perhaps we should discuss the best process. This makes a great deal of sense. Decision making is an integral part of that best process. By taking into account a variety of factors you are not only making the working parent decision but initiating the process of returning to work as well. You find that as you make the transition first into parenthood and then into working parenthood you are better able to effectively deal with any number of concerns that arise. This is only one of many challenges that come wrapped up with your bundle of joy!

The following "food for thought" will provide you with additional topics for discussion as you consider and manage going back to work. And the remaining chapters will help define those concerns and provide some guidance as you face them.

Food for Thought

1. While you both are comfortable with your decision to become a working family, a close family member isn't. In fact, whenever the family is together s/he minces no words about how deprived your child will be and what horrors the future holds for a child whose parents both work. What can you do to ease the tension?

2. A co-worker tells you, "I'm tired of hearing you talk about your baby so much. If you miss her, then you should stay home with her." Of course this insensitive comment angers you, but it also worries you since this person is known to have a direct

line to your supervisor's ear. How can you deal with this situation?

3. Both of you agreed not to work any overtime during your baby's first nine months. Your boss keeps pressing you to work Saturdays in addition to your regular five day work week. What can you do to keep harmony on both fronts?

4. At 5:45 a.m. you awaken to the sound of the phone ringing. It's your day care provider who is ill today. [If you take your baby to a center, the furnace isn't working and the center is closed.] A few frantic calls cannot yield substitute care. Both of you have equally busy schedules. What can you do?

5. You boss has been making more than a few comments lately about how having a new baby and a working wife must be quite demanding. You're beginning to wonder if this is more than friendly concern. How will you deal with this?

6. Your work day ends at five p.m.; from there it's a mad dash to pick up your baby at daycare by five-thirty. At four-thirty you are called into an emergency meeting guaranteed to last beyond five-thirty. You are unable to reach your spouse so s/he can pick up your child instead; the day care center closes at six p.m. What can you do?

7. Now that you're back to work, you have an uncomfortable feeling that your colleagues are just waiting for you to admit this is all too much and you're going to quit. They no longer include you in social activities and seldom ask you to lunch, which were "givens" pre-baby. What can you do to determine if this is your imagination or if there's something to it? If it is a problem, how can you deal with it?

8. This morning you swear you found mold growing in the shower and

your spouse claims s/he hasn't had anything but a fast food meal in months. You feel pretty overwhelmed by all the demands of working parenthood and are seriously considering "throwing in the towel." How can you help yourself and your family through this period?

9. You just shared three days at home with your wife nursing your baby through an ear infection and fever. Both of you felt good about how you each took turns during the day and night with your son, but now need to catch up at work. Your daycare provider calls you at work since she is unable to reach your wife, who is out of the office until noon. Justin is running 101° fever again and your daycare provider thinks it was probably too soon for him to be out of the house, anyway. You have an eleven a.m. meeting scheduled with a client you had to cancel while doing sick duty with Justin two days ago and it's now ten-fifteen. How can you handle this situation?

10. Everything seems to be going well except you feel that the baby just isn't doing as well as she could or should at her day care environment. Your spouse says s/he thinks everything is fine and that you're just looking for trouble. What can you do ?

11. You had dinner this past weekend with some friends who have a new baby six weeks older than your infant. This new mom has not returned to work. Inevitably you compared notes and by the time dinner was over, you both felt extremely guilty and inadequate as parents. What issues should you examine here and how can you deal with them?

12. During your commute time you've been reading a number of parenting books and are becoming increasingly concerned that the reason your daughter, at six months, is not sleeping through the night is because you returned to work when she was eight weeks old. When you mention this to your spouse, he suggests that maybe if you quit working then Julie will start

sleeping and, in fact, so would you and he. What other information would you need to get at this point? Where can you get it? Is this the best solution? the only solution?

CHAPTER THREE

Concerns of Working Parents

"Just wait!" The variation, "Just wait until..." may spring from the lips of well intentioned friends and relatives. Perhaps you're currently experiencing a barrage of "just waits" as your due date approaches or during the first months of parenthood. The heart of just wait is attitudinal - that being, no matter what your present concerns are, they pale by comparison to what lies ahead. Parents of all ages have fallen victim to many a "just wait:" "You think it's tough now, getting up in the middle of the night? Just wait until he's seventeen and you don't know where he is at one a.m.!" Don't start worrying about curfew breaking now while your baby is still crib-bound, however. Each age and step in development brings its own specific set of concerns that you'll need to contend with.

This chapter will identify and deal with the concerns shared by new working parents. These include:

- feeling guilty
- establishing family relationships
- breastfeeding and working

What concerns you?

Over the past three years I've surveyed almost six hundred expectant parents regarding their plans for entering working parenthood. These surveys asked: What is your greatest concern about returning to work? Almost always both parents placed baby related concerns above all others. They worried about establishing a good relationship with their baby and about finding quality child care. Time and energy issues appeared, but not nearly with the frequency these other concerns surfaced. It seems as if parents consciously planned to put their baby first. They also worked hard to bring the other concerns into line, establishing their own coping mechanisms. Finding methods of manageability is a sizeable

concern that later chapters will address.

Feeling Guilty

"The way you spell motherhood [and fatherhood] is G-U-I-L-T." Perhaps truer words were never spoken. We all want the best for our children, which precipitates a continuing struggle to find and then deliver this commodity. Having Mom home all day with her baby was once synonymous with giving the best. This is the situation most of us grew up with; maybe in our hearts we still define this as the best possible situation for our baby. A 1982 survey conducted by the Public Agenda Foundation tends to confirm this. 42% of working women with children under age twelve agreed with the statement: "When mothers of children under six work, it weakens the family." 43% of that same group agreed with the second statement: "Having a mother who works is bad for children under the age of six." 63% of the working men interviewed also agreed with that statement. Suffice it to say we're currently in the process of re-defining "best," as elusive as that concept may truly be. But from this--and a myriad of other concerns--is born guilt. No matter what we do, or how well we do it, there remains someone who often explicitly and without invitation makes us feel guilty.

For the most part guilt is not a productive emotion. Many people tend to "wallow" in the feeling rather than doing anything about it. Guilt can be turned into a positive emotion by using it as a springboard to activity. Ask yourself why you're experiencing these feelings and what you can do to eliminate them--then do it! Sometimes the answer is there's nothing you can do. At that point accept your guilt feelings as a normal, natural part of parenting and move on. The following can help you do just that.

*<u>Everyone, at some time or another, feels guilty</u>. There are couples who wear the working parent label well. Nothing ever seems to faze them. Their marriage is made all the stronger by being a two career couple. Infant day care was a breeze to find and, in fact, little Jody's motor development has been phenomenal resulting from the stimulation s/he receives in the day care environment.

Both parents are doing extremely well in their chosen fields. He was just promoted again and she recently received another raise. They have a fifty/fifty marriage, splitting child care and household responsibilities down the middle. These parents manage to see all the latest films, read the best seller list and in the process make the rest of us feel like total failures. (By the way, working parents like this exist far more frequently on television,in the movies or in novels than in the real world.) Do they ever feel guilty? Outwardly, no - it doesn't fit the image. Inwardly, I'll guess yes - and bet that I'm right. It's not important to look like you've got it all under control. Dealing with guilt feelings, not denying them, is healthy for your family's relationships.

*Talk to each other. Probably nothing is more important to a healthy family than open, honest, regular communication. If you want to be supported, you must be a supporter in return. Many new mothers are suprised to hear their husbands express feelings of doubt, uncertainty or guilt about their own dual working parent arrangement. Mothers do not have a stranglehold on guilt!

*Find support. I can't emphasize this aspect of working parenthood enough. Our own working at home mothers had an enormous support network in each other. We need to forge a similar system. Look to other working parents, sympathetic family members and friends, co-workers in similar circumstances, or your day care provider. These people provide empathy and understanding as they commiserate with you. Your concerns are mutual and no better support comes than from others in the same situation. Sometimes the support seeks you out, but more often it requires an active, ongoing process. (One word of caution: do be careful about bringing your "baby stories" to work. Some work situations are less tolerant of this than others.) Don't overlook tangible types of support, such as babysitters, cleaning help, shopping services, etc. Chapter Five explores these ideas in detail.

*What else influences how you're feeling? Can you truly isolate feelings of dissatisfaction to the fact that you're both working? Often the problems are more complex and not directly tied

to your employment. Try making a two column list like the one below:

THINGS THAT ARE GOING WELL	THINGS THAT ARE NOT GOING WELL
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Items in one column may outnumber the items in the other, especially if you find yourself in a rather negative frame of mind. In that case, you might want to do this another day when you're on more of an even keel. After you've made the lists, ask yourselves if staying home would truly rectify the "not going wells." You'll probably see this really wouldn't be a plausible solution. There is always something to feel guilty about, always something not going quite as smoothly as you wish it would. As one friend told me, "Now that I'm working I feel guilty when I forget to buy bread. When I was home I felt guilty when I bought the bread rather than baking it!"

*Re-examine your reasons for working. Return to the needs assessment worksheets in Chapter Two on a regular basis, perhaps every six months. Would it be possible to live on one paycheck, now that you see where the second income is going? Does your job fulfill you as you've maintained it does? At this point would a switch to part-time be feasible and a good alternative? Where you find yourself in the workplace today may not necessarily be where you hope to find yourself ten years from now--but by then your baby will be that much older, too!

With the competition in today's workplace, many new parents worry (and rightfully so) about the effect not working would have on future career development. Working up to a level of competency

and responsibility requires a great deal of continuing time and energy. In some fields there is no such thing as "marking time;~ taking any time away from the job loses one's place in that career. These are valid considerations to make as you re-examine your reasons for working. At this point some new parents evaluate their career goals and self-expectations. Writing in Pregnant While You Work, Wenda Wardell Marrone talks about two changes working mothers [and fathers] need to make. The first is the switch from judging your career in public terms (i.e. an outward badge of success like a job title) to private, individual goals that may represent a satisfactory career stage to you though perhaps not to an observer. Remember that having a new baby is a transitory phase of your lives; as your baby grows and changes, your ability and desire to devote more time to your career may also increase. For other parents the ability to focus almost completely on the job never returns. This is the second change Marrone writes of, one of perspective. Before you became a parent, your primary focus could very well have been your job (and spouse). Having a baby tends to make you look at your life as a whole, with your job being just one part--and perhaps a decidedly smaller part than before--of that whole.

Who is this person, anyway?

I remember walking down to the nursery only hours after Tom's birth to check on my new son. I stopped at the window and felt bewildered. Which of those dark haired bundles was mine? And then came the ultimate pangs of guilt. How could I, a mother, not know my own baby? If I couldn't even identify him, how in the world would I be able to parent him successfully?

The parent-child contract is for a life time, not just the early months or preschool years. (Your mother and father still worry about you, don't they?) Much emphasis is placed on infancy by many child care experts because during this time you and selected others comprise your child's world, his sphere of influence. Once your baby becomes more mobile, verbal and consequently more

independent of you, he becomes subject to a variety of influences. It's felt that many subsequent judgements made by your child have their roots in the early years where you laid the foundation. It also seems, however, that the attachment process--the formation of emotional bonds between parent and child--is an ever changing, always challenging one that doesn't end when your child goes to nursery school. As parents we have many opportunities to build and strengthen these bonds throughout our family's lifetime.

Still, the need remains for getting to know your baby, and that requires time. The challenge is to first find the time and then put it to maximum use. The same holds true for another changing relationship, your marriage. The transition into parenthood (much less working parenthood) can be stressful for even the most even-tempered of adults. These relationships will be examined in Chapter Six.

The working mother and her nursing baby

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that every woman who can breastfeed do so for as long as possible. While there are some circumstances that prevent new mothers from nursing their babies, it is definitely possible, even preferable, for you to continue breastfeeing when you return to work. According to Mitty Johnson, a Twin Cities (Minnesota) area breastfeeding consultant, this may be one of the nicest things you can do for yourself and your baby. It actually makes time for one-to-one contact with your baby, providing an ideal situation where you're literally forced to take time from your busy schedule and spend twenty to forty restful minutes while you nurse. Mitty has counseled working mothers who choose to continue breastfeeding after returning to work. It provides an emotional attachment with their baby that makes separation during working hours less traumatic. You can choose from a number of options combining breastfeeding, working and supplemental feedings that best suit your own family situation.

Before those options are discussed, you should know that this section is not designed to be a complete guide to breastfeeding,

nor is it intended to be the complete guide on breastfeeding and working! Volumes have been written (quite well and quite completely) on these subjects, so if you haven't already invested in one or more books on breastfeeding, check with Appendix One for a list of books on this subject. "Buy at least one book on breastfeeding" is often the way I preface any presentations on working and nursing and the following information certainly needs supplementing by additional resources. In addition, check into breastfeeding classes offered in your community by the local LaLeche League, childbirth education group or hospital. More and more specific classes on breastfeeding and working are being offered, although Cheryl Kirchner, R.N., director of parent education at United Hospital in St. Paul, MN and a breastfeeding instructor recommends taking a basic breastfeeding class prior to one that offers specific information about combining nursing and working.

Ilene Rice, author of Heartstart: A Practical Guide to Breastfeeding, often refers to the nursing family rather than the nursing mother. The help and support Dad provides Mom and baby, especially while working and continuing to nurse, are important components that promote successful breastfeeding. Nursing the baby once you've returned to work may require not only verbal encouragement from Dad, but practical support as well.

Making a decision about how you'll feed your baby while at work should be based on what pragmatically is best for you. There are three options for interim or supplemental feedings.

1. Continue to breastfeed while you're at work. This can be accomplished by bringing the baby to work with you, having her brought to work for nursing during lunch break (and other times where possible), or returning to day care (or home) during lunch to nurse. Obviously this is feasible only in the most cooperative work settings, where you work close to your baby's day care situation or if someone would be able to bring your baby to work when she is ready to nurse.

2. Collect breastmilk to leave for the next day's feeding. This involves expressing milk while you're at work, either manually

or with a breast pump. Experience with milk expression is important prior to your return to work. Before deciding whether or not to use this option, Mitty suggests asking yourself the following:

- can you get away for up to twenty minutes, twice or three times daily, to express milk?
- is there a private, relaxing area available for you to collect breastmilk? Some women have no difficulty with the let-down reflex and can express milk just about anytime, anywhere. Others find their environment plays a major role in successful let-down and expression of breastmilk. The women's lounge or nurse's office in larger companies/schools might be comfortable. Perhaps you could "borrow" the private office of an empathetic co-worker (unless you have one of your own). The bathroom stalls may not be the best place in the world to express and collect milk, but they also may be your only alternative. Using the relaxation techniques learned in your childbirth education classes can be beneficial in allowing the let-down reflex to occur. One new mother said she brought along tapes of relaxing music, which she played through her headphones. She also made a tape of her son's crying and said that almost always stimulated her let-down reflex! If there are a substantial number of pregnant women in your company, you might try convincing your employer to buy an electric breast pump and provide a comfortable setting for the nursing mothers to express milk. Both of these are time savers for the employee and the compnay.
- are there facilities for storing the breastmilk once it's been collected? Refrigerator or freezer space is the best, but a cooler or wide-mouthed Thermos packed with ice also work well.

- is there adequate time left after expressing for you to eat lunch? Production of breastmilk requires that the producer (that's you, Mom) takes proper care of herself. Good nutrition is an important factor in successful breastfeeding. This includes eating four milk products, three proteins, two fruits, two vegetables, four whole grains and drinking up to ten - eight ounce glasses of fluid daily. This is one area where Dad can not only remind Mom about her eating habits, but help by packing nutritious lunches and snacks for her to take to work. Swearing off junk food yourself makes it easier to maintain healthful eating as a family. (All too soon your baby will refuse her vegetables if she sees that her parents aren't eating them!)
- would you feel comfortable expressing breastmilk at your workplace? Feeling uptight, nervous or uncomfortable about this can effect your let-down reflex, perhaps leading to a decrease in milk production. Again, some work environments are decidedly more supportive of working mothers but they may draw the line at someone using their office or the bathroom to express milk. You might want to discuss this with your boss and/or co-workers in advance to determine their feelings, but keep in mind your feelings and determination to combine breastfeeding with working.

3. Breastfeed while at home and leave supplemental bottles of formula (or breastmilk) at day care. Here you're not collecting breastmilk during working hours. My experience has been that this is the option chosen most often by nursing working mothers. If you are collecting breastmilk, Mitty suggests expressing the excess milk during or after the first morning feeding when milk production will have been greatest during the night. This will help to further empty the breasts, making you more comfortable during work. Gradually your body will become accustomed to your baby's demands; as he nurses less often, you will make less milk. Some mothers

nurse twice a day, once in the morning and then again before the baby goes to bed at night. All other feedings are given by the day care provider and Dad. Others nurse as soon as Mom and baby return home from work and then more often in the evening, sometimes even through the night. Find a pattern that best fits your own lifestyle. Don't feel guilty about how many times you nurse or that you choose formula to interim feed your baby. Dads often appreciate the special interactive times they have with the baby while giving him the bottle.

A nursing working mother has the additional responsibility of maintaining an adequate milk supply for her baby. Some `words of wisdom' from Mitty bear repeating: "This is no time to prove to yourself and everybody else that you can accomplish everything you did before the baby was born, as well as assuming a new twenty four hour job and now returning to work. Be fair to yourself! Treat yourself properly and that in turn will be treating your family well."

A valuable resource available in most communities is the LaLeche League. This organization is dedicated to the promotion of breastfeeding and provides support, information and troubleshooting through its leaders and group members. Your childbirth education instructor should be able to supply you with the phone number for local La Leche groups. The La Leche League International is listed in Appendix Two.

Just wait...I'm waiting

Earlier I neglected to mention two very important aspects of "just wait." The first is that you grow into what the "just wait" holds in store for you. At this point you probably can't imagine life with a toddler much less a teenager. Each stage of your child's growth and development is paralleled by concurrent parental growth and development. Although there are some situations as a parent you're never totally prepared for, you do rise to the occasion. Second, "just wait" sounds so threatening, so negative when in fact many of the just waits are joyous, exciting,

fulfilling events. Just wait for those first smiles. Just wait until she says "Mama." Just wait until he falls asleep peacefully in your arms and you marvel as this person who has singlehandedly changed your house into a home. Just wait...

CHAPTER FOUR

The Search for Quality Infant Day Care

"Day care."

It happens at parties, on the playground, even in the business meeting. Once the magic words are spoken, all other conversations cease and now this topic--day care--becomes the focus of the working parents' attention. And well it should be, for without day care there would be very few working parents! Over and over expectant parents identify this issue as one that they are extremely concerned about. Many parents indicate their satisfaction with day care arrangements either "makes or breaks" their ability to combine family and work.

Yet as the numbers of parents with infants in the workforce continues to climb, day care becomes increasingly contraversial because of the many pragmatic issues involved: the high price of infant care, the shortage of space for infants in day care, the role government should take in regulating day care, the role business may be forced to take in providing on-site care or financial vouchers for day care to employees. It is contraversial also because of the human relationship issues involved: the as yet unknown long-term effects day care may have on infants and toddlers, the documented increased spread of communicable diseases in day care settings, the possible interference in the parent-child bonding/interaction that day care may have, the high turn-over of staff which may leave a child without a stable, predictable, loving relationship for eight to ten hours a day.

There are no easy answers to any of these questions and this chapter is intended to have you raise a few more questions of your own. It will look at:

- is substitute care harmful or helpful?
- what constitutes quality infant day care
- the types of infant day care widely available
- a step-by-step approach to finding day care
- checklists for evaluating day care facilities and providers

Will day care help or hurt our baby?

The best answer is probably some of both. It's important to recognize that the current state of research regarding the effects of substitute care on infants is in somewhat of an infancy stage itself. There are a number of on-going studies designed to look at present day infant day care, since the great numbers of infants in day care is a fairly recent phenonmena. Many of today's infants will remain in day care through grade school, which provides researchers an opportunity to follow these children with longitudinal study. Most of the prior research is based on anecdotal stories or information gathered by studying infants in orphanages and foundling homes. Today's quality day care bears no resemblance to the orphanages of the early 1900's.

The Panel on Work, Family and Community indicated that successful child rearing and child development are a consequence of many factors, one of which and not necessarily the most important is whether or not that child's parents are both working. The Panel also indicated that there is no compelling evidence to suggest that parental employment has only good or only bad consequences for all children in all circumstances. To date maternal employment has not been shown to have consistant direct effects, either positive or negative, on a child's developmental and educational outcomes. This is a fence post view, since the available research doesn't provide absolutes in terms of whether your working is bad or good. It does say that there are a number of factors that come into play, one of which is the day care experience. What becomes important for you as parents, then, is to ensure the best possible day care situation for your baby.

Currently researchers are examining how day care affects the social and emotional development of a child, as well as the child's physical health and development. As you might imagine, there are positives and negatives regarding these issues. Alison Clarke-Stewart, author of Daycare, feels that any structure in a

day care setting tends to increase the social and intellectual development of children as opposed to their peers who remain at home with their mothers. Day care, according to Clarke-Stewart, increases a child's ability to get along with other children and provides them with confidence in meeting someone new. On the negative side, children in day care tend to be more aggressive and assertive; however, the same might be said for children who come from large families and have siblings around all day. Clarke-Stewart also indicates that day care children tend to be less compliant, even with their own parents.

All parents are concerned about forging strong emotional bonds with their children, but perhaps this is even a greater worry to working parents. It's not uncommon for new parents to wonder if their child will be able to differentiate between them and the day care provider. Author Dr. Michael Rutter writes that day care children develop emotional bonds in much the same way and at much the same time as do children who are reared at home. He indicates that the main bonds are usually with the parents rather than the day care staff. Byrna Siegel-Gorelick, author of The Working Parents' Guide to Day Care, describes children of different temperaments who can be expected to differ in the way they adjust to day care. Pediatrician T. Berry Brazelton also encourages new parents to learn their child's personality and temperament, which will assist in making a good match between your baby and his day care provider. Depending on your length of leave, you may not have a good "handle" on what your baby's temperament is before placing him in day care. It may be helpful to remember that some child psychologists believe temperament is an in-born mechanism, something you as parents learn to work with and adjust to. Your "easy" baby may have no problem adjusting to any day care situation, while a friend's "difficult" baby would be unhappy with Mary Poppins.

During the discussion of the "best" time to return to work in Chapter Two, separation anxiety was discussed. This is another factor child care experts encourage parents to consider regarding the possible emotional effects day care might have on your child.

Most recommendations are for a return to work before six months or after eighteen months, avoiding the most intense time of separation or stranger anxiety. This certainly is something to keep in mind when you consider a day care placement for your baby. Remember that there are personality (temperament) differences in children that may also have a bearing on how your baby adjusts to her day care situation. (Of the little O'Briens, only Bridget ever balked at going to another person; Molly, Tom and Maggie were socializers all through six to eighteen months and beyond.) Your approach to day care is important here, too. Keeping things non-stressful and upbeat conveys a positive attitude. Infants do pick up clues from parents on how to react. If you're nervous about how your baby will do in day care, she very well may become nervous, too.

In terms of physical health, a recent study published in Pediatrics confirmed what many working parents (and parents of school aged children) have known for awhile. Children who attend day care and their families face an increased risk of catching any number of diseases, including the common cold and flu. Keep in mind that the only way you can prevent your baby from catching something, sometime is to isolate him from the rest of the world! However, you also don't want to put your child into a risk situation. The authors of the Pediatrics study made a number of recommendations to minimize the spread of disease, including frequent hand washing by staff and children, good hygiene (appropriate disposal of soiled diapers) and up-to-date immunizations. Much of what your baby may or may not catch is probably dependent on his own resistance and stamina. In our family Tom seems to catch every bug that is floating around the city, but very rarely does that same bug bite his sisters!

A number of studies have shown no negative effect on the physical growth and development of children in day care. Your baby already has a genetic blueprint that tells how tall she is going to be, when she'll experience puberty, if her eyes will turn any color but milky blue. The internal time clocks of development seem to run independently of external factors, such as day care.

What is quality infant day care?

Ask any working parent what s/he likes best about their day care situation and you're on your way to identifying what constitutes quality day care. It is important to realize that not all day care is uniform and that certain children can thrive in one day care situation while another child withers. For expectant and new parents this is perhaps one of the most troublesome aspects of placing your child into day care. Many books on this topic will advise you to find a program that best fits your child's needs or personality. This is difficult to do when, as in some situations, you're placing a child you don't yet know because he hasn't been born! Keep in mind the following factors identified as components of a quality day care program. This is what you'll be looking for - among other things - when you begin your day care search.

The infant/staff ratio is especially important when placing your baby in day care. Since infant care is more time intensive than other kinds of child care, how many infants being cared for by one person becomes a crucial issue. A number of states, cities and counties mandate a infant/staff (or toddler/staff, child/staff) ratio for licensed day care providers. At present there are no national guidelines for such staffing. One to one is the best possible ratio; Professor Jerome Kagan of Harvard recommends no more than three to one. The outside acceptible ratio seems to be four infants to one provider.

Your baby's day care environment should be a predictable one. Predictability is one way infants learn to judge the world. It doesn't take long for them to learn that different cries will produce different responses from their parents (as well you may know). These same cries should be heeded in the same predictable manner by your baby's day care provider. Consistency is an important tool in child rearing which begins when you and your baby work out a series of predictable responses to daily needs. As you look at various day care facilities, consider what your own approaches and patterns to child rearing will be, then choose a provider compatible with your own methods. This will help make it

easier for all of you to switch gears from home to day care back to home again.

Another aspect of day care that is especially important is reliability. Nothing strikes fear into the heart of working parents like the 6:00 a.m. phone call from a sick day care provider. Be certain you choose a day care facility that will be open--and stay open--the hours you need to use it. Check to see if there are established back ups in case the provider becomes ill. (In a center you should ask how reliable the individual teachers are.) In the best of all worlds, your day care should be so reliable that once your infant begins going there, she will remain there until she no longer needs any before or after school care. Frequent changes in day care are disruptive to the entire family, but especially to your baby. She doesn't have an opportunity to establish a sustained relationship with her caregiver, a third component of quality day care. Such relationships give your infant an opportunity to bond and grow with another adult, a factor often identified as important to your child's self-esteem. Your baby's relationship with her day care provider benefits the entire family. Some day care providers truly serve as the extended family for working parents.

The major difficulty in finding predictable, reliable day care environments is that, in addition to a nationwide shortage in day care providers, there is a high turnover in this profession. One primary reason is the poor salary and benefits paid to day care professionals; in certain situations degreed day care teachers are paid little more than minimum wage. There is no specialized training required for most day care providers, although this is changing on both local, state and national levels. Some mothers decide to become day care providers feeling it will be a good method of remaining at home with their own children while making some extra money and providing their kids with playmates. Once they begin taking care of other children, however, they find it more taxing and tiring than they anticipated. Women at home report feelings of isolation since so many more mothers are back to work. However, there are a substantial number of providers who have

chosen day care as a profession and stick with it for a number of years.

The final aspects of quality day care is that the provider and the environment are loving and caring. These speak for themselves.

The next move is out into the real world - the actual process of finding day care for your baby. The following seven step procedure is designed to help you cover all the bases as you make your day care decision. Before starting, however, there are three cautions you should be aware of:

1. This process is not guaranteed as foolproof.
2. It requires time for the best outcome. You will want to begin preliminary investigation for day care during your last trimester--or right now if you've already had your baby. There is a Catch-22 associated with this, however. Because infant day care space is at a premium, some day care facilities may not want to meet or talk with you until less than six weeks before you're ready to place your baby. You may need to be assertive and at the very least check out the kinds of day care available to you, getting a feel for what type of day care environment you will want. If in the process you find what seems to be your quality day care, you might negotiate a "holding fee." This is a portion of the provider's salary or center's tuition that serves to hold a space for your baby until he to be taken to day care. A number of providers do require some sort of deposit upon enrollment.
3. Infant day care is expensive. How expensive is surprising to many expectant and new working parents. It is costly for providers to equip homes or centers with cribs, high chairs, playpens, changing tables and other baby paraphenalia. (Just think how much it's costing you to furnish the nursery!) Since infant/staff ratio is usually smaller than toddler or preschooler/staff ratios, it limits the number of children an in-home provider can have. It also requires a center to hire a larger employee corps. The city of St. Paul, MN recently reported that the annual

cost of day care runs from approximately $3100 for family day care, $4300 for day care center to $5,000 for an in-home, non-relative provider.

Step One: Where are babies cared for?

in your own home - This option is an appealing choice, especially for parents of infants and toddlers. In-home care can be provided by a relative, friend or a non-relative, someone you hire to provide this service. Depending on the size and space of your home, your day care provider may live with you or come into your home only during designated hours to care for your baby.

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Advantages:

* In-home, one on one care is most often recommended for infants.
* It is the least disruptive for the entire family, offering your baby a familiar environment (his own home) with one provider.
* Live-in caregivers often become more like a family member as opposed to hired help.
* You have the optimal opportunity to establish your own rules for your baby's care.
* This option is also the most convenient. You never have to wake a sleeping baby or expose him to bad weather to take him to day care.
* Sick child care is not a problem since the provider can take care of him in his own home should your baby become ill.
* The provider may do other activities in addition to child care, such as some cooking, cleaning or running errands.
* If it is a family member coming into your home, this is someone who may already have an attachment to your

child, a definite plus in establishing a sustained relationship.

* Overall in-home care provides the most flexibility for both the parents' and infant's schedules.

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Disadvantages:

In-home care is the most expensive type of day care.
You are required to withhold taxes and perhaps provide your provider (your employee) with benefits, such as liability insurance, medical and dental coverage. For complete information covering your particular situation, check with a tax accountant or the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).
If you have a family member as your day care provider, it is important to feel confident you all can handle this added dimension to your relationship.
The loss of privacy with both live-in and come-in care is of concern to some working parents.
Some families feel live-in caregivers have too much attachment to their child, which small children may find confusing.
You will still need to make arrangements for back up care should your provider become ill.
As with most day care providers, there are no training requirements for in-home providers. A number of nanny services do have programs for the nannies that are then placed with your family, but the quality of these varies widely.

in another person's home - This is commonly called family day care and may be licensed or unlicensed. Licensing means that the caregiver has met requirements set by the state/city/county for safety, cleanliness and child/staff ratio of the home. In some areas licensing gives providers membership in day care provider

groups or associations. Such groups may offer workshops, trainings and seminars to their members, as well as giving them an opportunity to network with each other. Usually only licensed homes are those listed by governmental or non-profit information and referral services. The governing agency which sets state and/or local guidelines differs widely from state to state. If you are living in a major metropolitan area, the chances are good that established agencies are listed in both the white and yellow pages of your phone book. For parents in smaller or rural communities, begin by calling your city or county health department, which often has a division of maternal and child health. They should be able to refer you to the appropriate licensing agency. From the licensing agency request a copy of the licensing guidelines, both for your information and as a basis for judging licensed and unlicensed day care homes and centers. Your local public library may also have information in this regard.

Unlicensed homes may or may not have met the local requirements for licensing. There are a number of reasons why an individual provider may choose not to be licensed. For example, in some states a person is not required to obtain a day care provider's license if she is caring for children from only one other family that her own. Some providers feel that the licensing covenants are restrictive and expensive to meet. Remember that licensing in and of itself does not ensure quality day care. It can be a useful tool, but only one of many you can use in finding the most appropriate day care situation for your baby.

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Advantages:

* Day care homes provide the most home-like atmosphere away from home. There is one environment, usually one provider and often a continuity of home values and child rearing style.
* Family day care can be the most affordable day care option for working parents.

* Depending on the number of children and their ages, there may be interplay of the group. This usually allows siblings to stay together (something to think about if you plan more than one child) and also affords continuity of care, providing a stable environment over a number of years.
* Since the group size in family day care is small, this allows more individual attention to be given to each child.
* Some family day care providers are very flexible with their schedules, important if you're considering part-time or flex-time hours.

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Disadvantages:

One of the biggest problems for working parents is that family day care, at least anecdotally, seems to lack stability.
Since this is a private arrangement between you and the provider, it is generally an unsupervised situation. Even where licensing does occur, there may be little meaningful supervision of the homes once the license is issued. However, this is one area day care associations, the National Association for the Education of Young Children, and the government are working toward remedying.
The day care provider is not required to have any specialized training or background in child development. Again, this is an aspect of day care many local and national groups are focusing on improving.
You may have less control over your child's routine in this environment.
Back up care will be needed in the event of your provider's illness.

day care centers - There are five types of day care centers:

1. Church based are in a church basement or school. These may be partially subsidized or supported by the church as part of their committment to the community. In some congregations children of parishioners have first priority in the day care center.
2. Commercial, for-profit centers are usually free standing buildings found in larger communities. KinderCare is an example of a chain day care center, although smaller for-profit centers are located in many cities. These are often managed by professionals who have a background in early childhood learning or child development.
3. Cooperative centers are run and controlled by the parents whose children are enrolled there. They set the rules, hire staff and make decisions regarding the center's functioning.
4. Non-profit centers differ from church based in who sponsors or subsidizes the center. They are often sponsored by governmental agencies, other non-profit groups or hospitals.
5. On-site centers are usually located on the premises or nearby your workplace. They may be underwritten by the company or the firm may provide space only to another group that then manages and runs the day care center.

A sixth type of center is university or college based. It exists as a teaching lab for the school's early childhood education department. Obviously this center is available only in towns and cities that have these institutes of higher learning.

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Advantages:

* Since the physical plant of the center will always be there, this may be the most reliable day care option.
* Day care centers often group their children according to ages, so there is much peer group interaction.
* There are a variety of locations, a convenience factor.
* Some day care centers design their programs along a "school-type" environment and schedule.
* There may be a wide variety of toys and activities, both indoor and outdoor, available to your child.

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Disadvantages:

For infant day care, this option can be quite expensive.
Staff turnover can be high. While the physical plant is always there, the same teachers may or may not be. This also creates a problem with understaffing if substitute teachers are not available.
State or local guidelines will mandate infant/staff ratio, which may be higher than that allowed in family day care.
Infants may be put onto one schedule as opposed to being allowed the flexibility of their own schedules.
Privacy is at a premium in many day care centers.
Depending on your own philosophies, the more rigid scheduling may be a negative for your family.
Because of age grouping, siblings may not be together even though at the same center.
Back up care in case of your child's illness will be necessary.

If possible, it's advantageous to visit as many of these

options that are available to you in your community. On-site inspections can help you decide which kind of day care environment you feel most comfortable with. Talking with other working parents is also beneficial, but in the end you need to trust your own feelings and judgement. Having seen as much of the available day care will provide you with a good basis for completing the remaining steps.

Where do you find names of day care providers/centers? To begin, let your fingers do the walking; check the yellow and white pages of your phone directory. If your community has a day care information and referral system this may be listed in the white pages. Some of these systems can give you names of day care homes and centers in a specific geographic area. Others may also list providers who will come into your home. Many of these systems are partially subsidized by businesses (IBM contracts with local information and referral systems to help their area employees) or funded by local/state agencies, so the cost to use the service is nominal. For example, the Child Care Information Network in Hennepin County, Minnesota has a sliding scale fee based on income. Check municipal and county listings in the white pages for day care agencies and services as well. In the yellow pages, day care centers are listed under child care or day care centers while some in-home providers may be found under sitting services or under nanny agencies.

Word of mouth is another way many working parents gain leads on day care availability. Ask co-workers, friends, relatives, neighbors. Don't be shy about initiating conversations with parents carrying infants or toddlers in the local grocery store, pushing a buggy through the park or taking a stroll through your neighborhood. Call the secretaries at local churches or synagogues since they often know which members are day care providers or have infants/toddlers in day care. More than one casual conversation has yielded a gold mine of information in this area!

A third way to gather a list of potential day care providers is by posting notices. Many grocery stores or smaller shopping areas allow the posting of ads. A community center or park often has a central bulletin board. Some churches allow their members to publish requests in the newsletter or bulletin. Municipal and/or community newspapers often carry child care listings in the want-ads. Check with nearby nursery schools to see if they will allow you to post a notice outside the school rooms. Remember to keep your message short and to the point: "Loving day care needed for our infant son, your home or ours, 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday, begin September 1. Call 555-5555." You may want to add the area you're looking in, especially if you place the notice in a citywide newspaper.

Being inventive and persistent is becoming increasingly necessary during the day care search process. One expectant father indicated he called over seventy prospective day care homes. Mothers have told me of calling day care centers to place their unborn babies on waiting lists during the first trimester of pregnancy ("right after I got a positive pregnancy test," said one). Another mom said she asked every provider she talked to if they knew of anyone else doing day care who might have an opening, which paid off in a "dynamite" day care home for her daughter. Perhaps the most inventive approach came from a new mother in the "Mom and Dad Go Back to Work" class who said she called people in the newspaper who themselves were advertising for day care. "I made some good contacts that way and although we didn't find our day care provider from those names, I passed them on to a co-worker who did."

As you are gathering names, put them immediately in your notebook or into a file folder marked "Day Care." Having slips of paper with cryptic names and numbers on them in various places around home and work isn't always the best organized or most useful way of starting the day care search. A place with permanence may be best since you never know when you'll again need information about various day care providers.

Step Two: What's important to us in our baby's day care situation?

All through your lives as parents you will find yourselves in situations where you need to make decisions affecting your child's well-being. Quality day care is, perhaps, the first of such decisions. The definition of quality as it applies to your family should be established by you. Certain universal aspects of quality day care were previously discussed, but there are other components to take into account at this point. For example, many parents are able to choose between a day care environment that would be either closer to home, to one parent's work place or in-between work and home. There are pros and cons to all of these, depending on your own situations. Some parents like to be with their baby for as long as possible, so their preference is day care closer to work. Others would rather have time alone to make the mental switch from Mom/Dad, parent to Ann/John, employee and then back again at the end of the day; for them, day care closer to home is preferable.

Two sets of checklists follow. The first is to help in evaluating a day care facility (home or center). The second is an aid in evaluating a day care provider whether she is coming into your home, your baby is going into hers or she works at a center. (Referring to the day care provider as "she" is not meant to slight male day care providers. For the most part, day care providers are women.) Read through these lists individually and place a check next to those items you consider the MUSTS--you won't place your baby there unless these conditions exist. You also might want to make a notation next to those items that you feel are important, but not mandatory. If these are present, fine but if they're not, it wouldn't deter you from placing your baby in this day care situation. Together, then, compare your notations: you're now defining your family's quality infant day care situation.

* * * * *

EVALUATING A DAY CARE FACILITY: A CHECKLIST

_____ Is the facility licensed? Does it look and smell clean?

_____ Is the facility cheery? Does it appear warm and inviting? Is it environmentally comfortable (heating and cooling; ventilation)?

_____ Is the facility childproofed?

- _____ breakable items out of reach
- _____ electrical outlets covered
- _____ cabinets secured
- _____ detergents, medicines, cleaning equipment out of reach
- _____ stairways gated
- _____ garbage can covered and out of reach
- _____ fire extinguisher accessible to adults only
- _____ safety restraints/car seats used anytime children are transported

_____ Is there an area for the baby separate from the older children?

- _____ sleeping area, with individual cribs for each baby
- _____ changing area, with plastic lined and covered garbage cans for soiled diapers
- _____ safe play pen if children use a communal play area

_____ Are there toys appropriate for an infant?

- _____ safe crib mobile and crib toys
- _____ clean stuffed animals, hugging toys, soft dolls
- _____ small books
- _____ rattles
- _____ chewable, non-toxic items
- _____ grasping toys
- _____ small musical or noise making toys
- _____ balls that baby can grasp or large balls (nothing that can go into the mouth)
- _____ music, songs, records

_____ can you bring your own toys for use by your baby?
_____ are the babies taken outside to play or for walks in appropriate weather?

_____ Is there equipment suitable for an infant?
_____ cribs
_____ strollers/buggies
_____ baby swing
_____ rocking chairs
_____ infant seat with safety strap
_____ high chair with safety strap

_____ Are nutrition and health guidelines followed?
_____ proper disposal of soiled diapers
_____ breastmilk/formula heated to room temperature, preferably not in a microwave *
_____ frequent hand-washing by staff and children (before and after serving food, after diaper changing)
_____ opened baby food refrigerated in a covered container marked with each infant's name and used only for that child
_____ babies are held while being fed
_____ babies are not put into cribs with bottles
_____ individual baby's equipment (bottles, pacifiers) kept separate

_____ Are rooms that aren't babyproofed kept locked?

_____ Do crawling babies have the opportunity to explore the home/center?

_____ Do babies interact with each other? with older children?

_____ Does the center/home offer regular parents' meetings, classes or other support groups?

* Since microwave ovens tend to heat liquids unevenly, they are not recommended for heating bottles.

* * * * *

EVALUATING A DAY CARE PROVIDER: A CHECKLIST

(in day care centers, you may wish to ask these questions specifically of those working with the infants as well as the center's director or lead teacher)

HER BACKGROUND

_____ Why has she chosen to be a day care provider?
_____ How long has she been a day care provider?
_____ What were her previous job experiences?
_____ What background does she have in child care/child development?
_____ What is her family like? How do they respond to her job as a day care provider?
_____ Does she belong to any day care organization, group, network?
_____ Does she attend continuing education meetings, courses, seminars, etc.?
_____ Does she refrain from smoking when children are present?
_____ Do all the teachers/aides appear to get along and work well together?

HER INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN

_____ Does she hold and rock the infants and older children?
_____ Does she outwardly show affection to the babies and children?
_____ Does she soothe crying infants/ children?
_____ Does she encourage and praise infants/children?
_____ Does she treat each child as an individual?
_____ Do the children genuinely seem to like her and vice-versa?

_____ Is there laughter and smiling as interaction between the provider and infants/children?

_____ Does she ever sing to the babies and with the children?

HER ATTITUDES TOWARD INFANTS

_____ Is she willing to adjust the daily schedule to fit your baby's?

_____ Is she supportive of breastfeeding (if you plan to continue nursing)?

_____ Is she accepting of pacifiers, blankets, stuffed animals and other soothers?

_____ How does she feel about thumb sucking?

_____ Does she encourage individual differences in development?

_____ How does she put the baby down for a nap? (i.e. rock; place in the crib; let the baby cry himself to sleep)

_____ Does she speak positively about infants?

_____ Does she seem to genuinely like babies?

HER ATTITUDES TOWARD PARENTS

_____ Does she encourage your questions and comments?

_____ Does she take time each morning and evening to get re-acquainted with you and your baby?

_____ Does she seem interested in both of you as persons?

_____ Does she speak positively about parents of other infants/children ?

_____ Does she appear to be someone you can talk to easily and trust?

_____ Are you welcome to visit any time?

_____ Are you encouraged to volunteer or help out on occasion?

Another factor for consideration is how this particular day care situation will grow with your baby. Your own definitions of quality care may indeed change when your infant enters toddlerhood or becomes a preschooler. Check the reading/resource list for additional information about day care. Most of these will address

aspects of day care more appropriate to older children. At this point, our focus remains on infant care.

Step Three: Formulate a list of questions to ask during an interview

Very few of us have ever been in an interview situation where our palms didn't sweat or our pulse didn't race. Unless you interview as part of your job, conducting an interview can be somewhat nerve wracking. The interview process during the day care search is crucial since it is the basis on which you choose your baby's care. Take the checklists and use them as a guide for developing interview questions. Add other items you feel are appropriate or change the focus of questions to best fit your situation. You might want to start with the following list. Again, be certain you talk with all the teachers/aides involved in infant care at a day care center.

1. How long have you been a day care provider? Are you planning to remain in day care for at least a year?
2. What kind of schedule would my baby be on?
3. Where would my baby sleep?
4. How many other babies/children are there at this facility/home?
5. Where would my baby play? Will he play both indoors and outdoors? What kinds of toys do you have?
6. Who supplies the baby food/formula? Diapers?
7. When and how would you discipline toddlers? preschoolers?
8. How would you handle an emergency (illness or accident)?
9. Are there any child care books you would recommend to us?
10. What's your favorite activity to do with a baby?

OTHER:

You will also need to ask the "nuts and bolts" questions, such as:

1. What hours will you work? What time does the center open/close?
2. Can you be flexible if we need to bring our baby early or pick her up late?
3. What is your fee and how is it charged? Do you ever charge overtime? If so, under what circumstances and how is it charged? Do we need to pay when our baby doesn't come to day care (i.e. illness, holidays, vacations, etc.)?
4. Is substitute care available if you (the provider) become ill?
5. Can you provide us with three to five references?

OTHER:

You will want to schedule about an hour with each person, center or home you interview, so keep that in mind as you draw up your list of questions. Once you've agreed on which ones to ask, take time to answer those questions yourselves. Be honest and realistic in your expectations and examine your answers with a critical eye. While you should be setting high standards, be aware that there is a difference between quality and perfect day care. The perfect day care is probably non-existant. Quality day care, on the other hand, may have some minor flaws but for the main focuses on the basic values you and your baby's day care provider share. Your mutual ability to communicate is what, in the long run, proves most beneficial to your baby.

If your list of potential day care providers covers four pages in your notebook, you've probably already realized you won't be able to visit each and every one of them. Even if your list is only four names, your next step should be to set up appointments. A brief telephone call can screen which day care situations you

will choose to visit personally. The best times to call are nine-thirty in the morning, after all the children have arrived but before morning snack or one-thirty in the afternoon, after lunch and during nap/quiet time. The following phone interview form can be used to help you keep track of those day care situations you have called.

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW FORM

NAME OF PROVIDER/DAY CARE CENTER AND DIRECTOR

ADDRESS

PHONE

1. Are you currently accepting infants? Will you be accepting infants as of (your expected return to work date)?

2. Can you tell me what the "typical" day might be like for an infant in your care?

3. Are you caring for other infants? toddlers? preschoolers? What are the sleeping/playing/feeding arrangements?

4. What is your fee?

5. When can we visit?

OTHER:

Step Four: Questions (and answers) ready: now you interview!

In order to keep people and places straight, try to schedule no more than two interviews each day. Otherwise you may have difficulty remembering who said what, where and when! The best times to schedule an interview mirror the best times to call. You want to be there when the home/center is in action; ask specifically to arrange a visit during such times. Before actually going out on an interview, you might want to practice asking your questions of each other. Being nervous in this situation is normal for both you and the person you're speaking with. From your standpoint, you're visiting the home of a perfect stranger (or she's visiting you) with whom you are considering leaving your baby! Or you walk into a center filled with other children, knowing that your baby may soon be one of them. It can sometimes be a sobering experience. Bring along your notebook, copies of the checklists, your questions and your baby, if he's already arrived. As you arrive at each home/center, or when the provider comes to your home, jot down something about the person or physical plant that will later help you recall that particular interview (i.e. red brick building with large play area in front; infant teacher wore blue jeans and sweat shirt).

In The Working Parents' Guide to Day Care, author Bryna Seigel-Gorelick suggests two techniques to aid you during the interview process. The first is to keep your questions open-ended. Give the provider a chance to be herself, to express her own views and attitudes. Don't "fish" for the answers you want to questions; some people are adept are telling you what you want to hear, not what they really think. Second, utilize the old addage "one picture is worth a thousand words." This is your opportunity to watch the day care provider/center in action. What she says should manifest itself in what the provider does.

Walk around and tour the entire home/center. You might want to discreetly use the facility checklist while you're doing this. Be wary of homes that have many closed-off rooms or unprotected

stairways. In the infant room or when the provider is with an infant, watch how she holds each baby. Note what she says when she is changing or feeding a baby and watch how the baby reacts when rocked or held. Spend some time watching what occurs in the toddler and preschooler rooms (or with children of this age). Listen to how the provider speaks to the children, her tone of voice and the ways she deals with various situations. Notice how the children interact with each other and how the provider respects their play.

You will need to be friendly but business-like in your manner. If you plan an hour's visit, keep it to that time frame. Don't hesitate to consult your checklists or list of questions to be sure you're covering all your aspects of quality day care. Noting both the positives and negatives will help keep things clear in your minds, enabling you to make the best decision for your baby. Be certain to get the names, addresses and phone numbers of references. In a day care center, you may wish to ask the infant caregivers for individual references in addition to general references for the center. Ask specifically for names of parents whose infants are currently at this facility. You may also want to check with parents of toddlers who came into this program as infants. A provider coming into your home should furnish references that speak to her abilities to care for babies.

End the interview on a positive note, but don't commit until you have the opportunity to talk things over privately. Even if this appears to be the ideal day care situation for your baby, wait at least twenty-four hours before signing a contract. Once you (or the provider) have left, spend a minute jotting down your immediate, separate impressions; look at the checklists and make any pertinent notations there as well.

Step Five: Check references

You owe it to your baby and yourselves to carefully check the references of anyone you seriously consider as your day care provider. When you call a reference, identify yourself and ask

what the parent and child's experience has been with that day care provider/facility. You might want to ask if they can give you an unqualified recommendation. For the most part, checking references serves as affirmation. The parents you speak with will confirm your positive feelings. On the other hand, a phone call to a reference sometimes casts doubts if negative comments are made. While this may be troublesome, far better to be aware of any potential problems now than after you begin your baby's day care experience with that provider.

Step Six: Second interviews

A second interview affords you the opportunity to "make sure" this really is the day care situation you want for your baby. Just as with checking references, you should experience positive feelings when you return to this day care home/center or when the provider again meets with you. Many parents will tell you they went on a gut instinct when they made their final day care decision. "It just felt right" or "I felt good when we were there" are not scientific, checklist based statements--yet they are valid reasons for choosing a day care situation. If it doesn't feel right or good, then you need to look elsewhere. Picture yourself dropping your baby off in the morning, taking him from your provider's arms as you arrive home in the evening. Does that picture look right to you? Are you comfortable?

Beside the more structured interview setting, you might want to drop in, unannounced to a day care home/center you're strongly considering. Stop by on your way to work and watch how the parents and babies make the transition into the day care environment. Check in around noon, one of the busiest times for day care providers. You can also visit at the end of the day to see how the center or home helps families readjust.

Step Seven: Making the decision

At this point your heads may be swimming. At night you dream

about the day care provider you interviewed that day. You feel as if you look at another checklist or get one more piece of advice you'll burst. It's not uncommon to feel twinges of anxiety and guilt as well. Making the decision is a big step with major ramifications. It means you will both be going back to work. Even if you've planned this all along, signing a day care contract puts finality to the decision. Leaving your baby with another person for perhaps eight to ten hours a day is not easy. You will be relying on this person to give your baby quality day care, an enormous responsibility for both you and the day care provider.

In making this decision, rely on a multiplicity of factors. Take a sheet of paper and list each provider/center you're considering on it. Draw a line down the center for two columns, one headed Plus, the other Minus and objectively list the advantages and drawbacks of each day care provider. (You can do this either jointly or separately, then compare lists.) Keep talking to each other since your baby's day care placement must be a mutual decision. Any disagreement can be a future source of conflict, especially if there should later be problems with the day care situation. If necessary, call the references again or ask the provider for additional references. And don't neglect your feelings as important input. When you find yourselves coming back to a certain person or a certain facility, the decision has been made. However, if you haven't found a suitable provider, then it's back to Step One. DO NOT, under any circumstances, put your baby in a marginal day care situation. While you may be under the gun in terms of time, a less than satisfactory day care arrangement will cause problems everywhere - at home, at work, in your relationships with the baby and each other. Many working parents report their working is made that much easier when they are comfortable and pleased with their day care provider. Parents who have reservations about their baby's day care often find that working becomes more difficult. In the long run, it will be less unsettling for you and your baby if you begin the process again.

The next procedure is to notify the day care provider and firm up details. Most caregivers will have you complete a contract,

which is good protection for you and the provider. It may spell out a number of different items, but the following should be included:

- hours your baby will be cared for
- amount and method of payment
- overtime, vacation, sick days arrangment
- special provisions, such as back-up care in case of illness or a listing of persons not authorized to pick up your baby
- your baby's medical information (name, address and phone number of baby's doctor; any allergies; current immunization record)
- emergency information (your work addresses and phone numbers; three addresses and phone numbers of friends or relatives in case you can't be reached; address and phone of clinic/hospital you prefer your baby be taken to for emergency treatment)
- release form authorizing emergency medical treatment

Corporate day care?

Corporate involvement in day care may sound like the impossible dream, but it is becoming a reality in many areas. Employers are increasingly attuned to the needs of their working parents and from a practical standpoint, day care is one need a business can address successfully. Recent testimony in Congress has underlined the necessity for both government and business to help working parents balance responsibilities. While companies are not rushing to establish day care benefits (one study indicated only two thousand out of six million corporations do this), it might be advantageous for you to examine ways your employer can begin a program. There are a number of options a company can choose from; the three most commonly used are listed below.

On-site day care usually exists in larger companies, schools or hospitals. A space is set aside within the physical plant as a day care center for employees' children. Some centers will take children of non-employees as well. The company itself may manage

the day care center, hiring the director, teachers and equipping the facility. Fees may be lower for employees or may be competitive with similar programs nearby. The company may choose to lease space to a private concern, either for-profit or non-profit, who then manages the day care center. This center may be subsidized by the company, which often serves to reduce fees.

There are a number of benefits to both employers and families who use on-site care. Parents are able to spend breaks and lunch time with their children. They can schedule their child's doctor's appointment during a break time, eliminating travel to and from day care. Nursing mothers can save break time for use when their infant is ready to eat. Many parents report feeling more secure knowing their child is being well-cared for near by. They may have a greater involvement with how the center is run because they visit a number of times daily. Parents feel their company cares for them and their families on a personal level by the committment to day care.

Subsidies to employees differs from on-site care in that any number of day care providers may strike a deal with the employer to offer subsidies to employees whoe children use their day care services. KinderCare, a national day care center chain, offers the Kindustry program which functions in this manner. Often the choice of subsidized day care providers may be limited. If your quality day care provider is not on your employers list, you would not receive a subsidy.

Cafeteria-style benefits is a flexible benefit plan that can work in a variety of ways for all employees, not just the working parents. Each employee is given a set number of dollars which can be spent on different fringe benefits, such as insurance, additional vacation days or child care. Many companies prefer this option since it has the potential to benefit the entire workforce.

A fourth option sometimes used is pre-tax dollars for day care reimbursement. A working parent provides his employer with the amount paid for day care during each pay period. That amount is then removed from the employee's pay check and given in a separate check as a reimbursement. Taxes and other deductions are then

taken from the remaining amount in the employee's pay check. With the advent of new tax laws, this may no longer be permissable so it would be wise to check with a tax accountant before pursuing this option.

The next move is to get the information about corporate day care into the right hands. Depending on managerial personnel, this may be a challenge. First decide if corporate day care is even worth pursuing in your company. If working parents are the decided minority in your firm, chances are good that management interest will be slim. Politically it may not be astute to even suggest this topic; is it worth jeopardizing your job to propose this change? You may want to join together with the other working parents in your firm. There is strength (and safety) in numbers! A group may be able to brainstorm, plan and facilitate more effectively than an individual. Nurture a friendly contact in management, then invite him/her to your lunch or break time meetings and ask for input. Have that person tell you who to approach with your ideas and how to best have them implemented. Finally, be prepared to work with personnel representatives or contract negotiators. As yearly reviews and contracts come due, have an organized, straight-forward approach that shows management how and why their involvement in day care will benefit the entire company. Recognize that management probably will not come to you. It's up to you to be your own best advocates for change.

Beyond the day care decision

Once you have found your quality day care, your responsibility to your baby and your provider have just begun. It will be important for you to establish a good relationship with your day care provider. Schedule in an additional ten to fifteen minutes each morning and afternoon to talk with your day care provider. Get to know her as a person and let her do the same with you both. Treat her with respect and caring, which sets a good example for your baby. Deal with potential problems promptly; don't let things slide and then explode in anger. Your day care provider needs to

hear what your expectations are and how well she is meeting them. Face to face conversations are the best. T. Berry Brazelton feels that the communication should extend beyond parent and caregiver to all parents using the day care provider/center. This can be organized on a more formal basis, such as monthly sharing sessions, classes or seminars. Occasional volunteer help at day care is another way of working with your provider and meeting other parents. Some centers have seasonal activities, such as a fall pot-luck supper, winter carnival, spring art show and summer picnic. Take advantage of these opportunities.

You are your day care provider's employer and as such should treat her as fairly as you want to be treated by your boss. Keep to a strict payment schedule. If you are going to be late either in the morning or evening, be certain you call as much in advance as possible. The same holds true for vacations or other days off. Especially take the time to communicate with her; this can't be emphasized enough. A day care center director indicated she felt all the problems they'd ever had centered on lack of communication. "It was the parents who literally ran in, dropped the baby in the teacher's arms, ran off and repeated the procedure at the day's end that seemed to be the most dissatisfied. It was frustrating because I felt they knew the least about what we were doing here with their baby. And we've had teachers and aides who were reluctant to spend time with parents, too. All these people need to do is stop and talk to each other. They have an enormous common bond--this baby or child--and recognizing that immediately draws them together."

Chicken Soup?

Chicken soup has recently been officially recognized as an effective "cure" for the common cold or flu. Ear infections, chicken pox and assorted viruses are all part and parcel of growing up. In past generations mothers would pamper the sick child with a few days of bedrest, extra stories, flat ginger ale and homemade chicken soup. Today working parents have difficulty juggling their

schedules around the sick baby. Their Chicken Soup may be a sick child care center.

In a rising number of communities sick child care centers and services are blossoming. These places may take infants (usually six months or older) who have low grade fevers, colds, or other potentially contagious conditions that prevent them from going to day care. Your baby must first have been seen by his physician, clearing the way for admission to the sick child care center. Chicken Soup in Minneapolis does have a special room with a special entrance for children with chicken pox! Specialized sick child care services will send a trained health aide to your home to stay with your sick child. Many home nursing services also provide registered or licensed practical nursing care for sick children. If you have live-in or come-in help, she may be willing to stay with a sick child, too. The cost of these centers/services is not inexpensive as some charge upwards of $8.00 an hour. 3M of St. Paul partially subsidizes sick child care for its employees.

In Memory of Grandma Margaret

The search for quality day care is time consuming, physically exhausting and emotionally draining. Yet nothing makes being working parents easier for Dan and me than having tremendous day care providers for our children. Betty and Grandma Margaret epitomize all that is good in quality day care. They have become members of our family and vice-versa. They support, comfort and encourage all of us. Hugs and kisses mingle successfully with macaroni and cheese. Tears are kissed away and somehow that makes it all better.

When Grandma Margaret died in 1985, Molly had so many fond memories of her that made it easier for a then seven year old to cope with death. She spent quite a bit of time after the funeral reminiscing with Margaret's relatives, telling them how much she loved her and was loved in return. Watching all the day care families who came to share grief and support with Betty (Grandma Margaret's daughter), it became obvious that we all were part of

the extended family.

Our day care provider didn't fall from the sky into our lap. We invested a great deal of time in our day care search and have been richly rewarded for our efforts. There are many other working parents who certainly feel the same way. I hope that you, too, will experience this feeling at the end of your search for the best "home away from home" for your baby.

CHAPTER FIVE

Time and Energy Management

"Get Ready - Get Set - Go, Go, Go and keep on going..."

The information presented so far has been designed for the first two steps in the above quote. Perhaps you're already beyond getting ready, set and now are moving on the continual go cycle. Time management sounds like a marvelous concept in theory, but who in the working parent world has time to make the management a reality? Carol Lovett, a mental health consultant/counselor, feels that there may not be such a creature as time and energy management. "Move directly into stress management," says Carol, herself the mother of three young children. "Time and energy slip away, leaving stress in their wake." Yet she feels that management is the word to be emphasized, not stress. That's one of the keys to this chapter - finding appropriate and comfortable ways for you to manage on the home and work fronts. Such juggling is called meeting the constraints and challenges of reality. Let's look at three basic facts of life for working parents:

1. There are only twenty four hours in a day. (Thank goodness; can you imagine what we'd try to do with any more?)
2. All human beings require some sleep in order to function effectively. (Some of us need more than others, some less, but we all need to sleep!)
3. No one individual can do it all. (No matter how many furnaces you run on, at some point in time you're going to stop trying to do it all and rely, as Blanche DuBois once said, on the kindness [and assistance] of strangers [and not so strangers].)

This chapter offers one strategy for time and energy management. It includes:

* using a time log
* the pie (inedible, unfortunately)
* setting priorities

* follow through: the forgotten step
* the fine art of juggling

Reality tamers proven effective by many new working parents will be suggested. Finally, the imporntance of recognizing stress sources in your lives and how to best manage and possibly control these will be examined.

That old devil time

Whether we're enjoying ourselves immensely or suffering through a long day, the element of time remains a significant factor. When things are going marvelously, the day is barely long enough. But faced with an unpleasant task, the minutes seem like hours. When pressed, many working parents admit they'd like more time, but want it on their own terms. The extra hours wouldn't be for housework or staying late at the office. What would be nice are more hours for our babies, for each other, for ourselves. Certainly this sounds like a reasonable request; the challenge lies in squeezing these moments from out given twenty four hours. Community education programs through your local school district may offer time and energy management classes. Tuition fees for such classes can be nominal. They are often conducted in the evenings or weekends, an attractive option for working parents. A variety of time management seminars are offered by various business and concerns; these are usually more expensive and may meet during working hours.

Time management: bringing some control into your lives

While there are a variety of ways to effectively utilize time management, the logical first step is knowing where your time goes. We've all had days when we wearily crawl into bed wondering why we're so tired, not sure what we did all day to make us feel this way. A time management tool many consultants advocate involves keeping a time log. Be aware that it does take time to put together a comprehensive time log, but don't let that deter you, as

the results are well worth the effort. According to author William Steele (writing in Working Mother), what you should find by keeping a time log is both how much time you waste and how much time you have available. One source Steele cites estimates that most Americans have about fifty hours a week of uncommitted time which comes in short segments. I wonder, as did Steele, if said source was counting working parents in this group!

There are any number of ways to keep a time log and a few are suggested below. Do choose the method that will be most beneficial to you in the long run, i.e. one that you'll actually use. Time management consultants recommend carrying your log with you, as delays in recording can be distorted by inaccurate recall. Be sure, when logging workplace time, to include commuting, lunch hour and breaks. Honest recording is mandatory. You're not only identifying where your time goes, but tracking interruptions of your time. Note these and how you deal with them, recommends Steele. If you're currently on leave, Mom, try to put together a time log which reflects what your work situation will be like when you're a mother and how you anticipate your days at home might change. If you're expecting, you'll probably need to complete this exercise a second time once your baby has arrived.

* Keep your time log in an appointment book. These often divide the day by hours and minutes. Some desk-top calendars do the same. Actually, a notebook marked off with the time increments you want to record works well!
* Mark off what you've done in fifteen minute units. Don't write a treatise about your activities; simply jot down what you did, noting any interruptions. OR -
* Mark off what you've done in half-hour units. Some find the fifteen minute period too disruptive, consequently it doesn't portray an accurate picture of daily activity.
* Record your routine for a full week, both at home and on the job. Again, many find such dedication to task impractical, so an alternative is to
* Record at least three days of routine plus the weekend. Monday, Wednesday and Friday recording often provides a

realistic view of your work week. Don't neglect the weekend hours!

Once you've completed your time log, the next step in this time management strategy is to carefully examine where your time goes. Do this together. All too often each partner in the working parent couple strongly believes that s/he is the busier of the two, and what s/he really needs isn't time management. An extra set of hands belonging to your spouse appears as the perfect solution to potential problems. Since that person can't possibly be as busy as you are, s/he can assume additional household or child care responsibilities. This source of tension can be dispelled by sharing time logs with each other. Often this leads to the recognition that both of you are extremely busy, period.

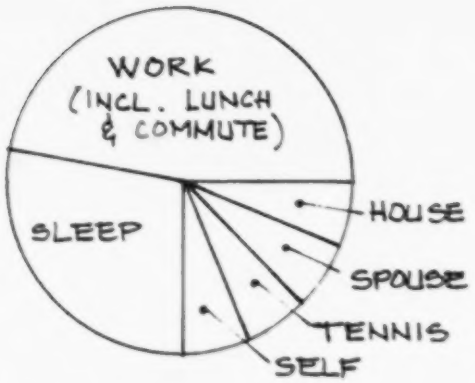
When going through your time log, look for places where you're wasting time (procrastination), your time is being wasted (interruptions) or your time is not well organized. Steele reports that work-simplification engineers see each task consisting of three parts: get ready, do, and clean up. He defines the basic principle of work simplification (a key factor in organization) as critically examining each job you do to see if it could be made more efficient or even eliminated. To do this, ask the following:

* What is the job? That is to say, what is the end result? Can you achieve this result more efficiently?
* Why are you doing it? This requires setting priorities (soon to follow). "Necessary" should mean "unavoidable," not "ought to be" or "the way it always has been, always will be..." It may also require that you let go some of the old ways which is not always easy or comfortable to do.
* How is it done? Is your lack of organization getting in the way of efficiency? Time management mandates a better, quicker method of job completion. Concentrate your efforts on one particular task at a time and don't let distractions divert you. Keep in mind here that your baby's schedule and yours may not always mesh. This doesn't necessarily reflect a lack of organization on the parents' part. This simply points up the often unpredictable nature of babies that can

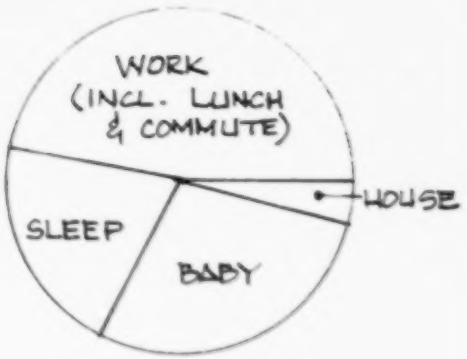
throw even the most organized of individuals for a loop. Let your baby be a pleasant distraction and attend to her needs.

* Where and when is it done? Could some at work activities be done even more productively at home? And when is two separate questions, says Steele. Not only does when mean on the clock or in the calendar, but it also means when in the sequence of events. Too often we waste time by shortcutting the sequence, only to discover the necessity of the eliminated step (and that's frustration with a capital F!)
* Who does it? Are you really the only person who can do this job? Perhaps more importantly, are you the best person for this task? We're sometimes hesitant to assign jobs to a co-worker, fearing that person won't complete the job as well as we could. In the end, we would have more work to do! On the home front, we--both men and women--too often assume traditional, sex-stereotyped roles when dividing up the labor. By and large women are still primarily responsible for household and child rearing activities regardless of any other jobs they have. While fathers today are increasing the time they spend on these tasks, the fact remains that the fifty/fifty division some of us felt (and hoped) would evolve in reality never came into being. What you want to avoid is a ninety/ten split. Remember fact of life number three--no one person can do it all.

Graphing your time log can be done a number of ways, including a pie chart. The first example on the next page shows one way of charting a time log, which you can do in your notebook. It takes your entire day and divides up categories of activites into percentages or pieces of the pie.

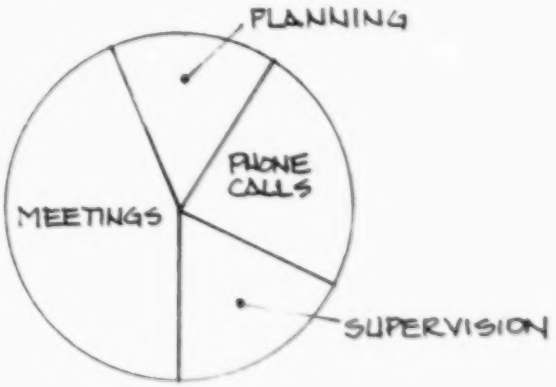


Pre-Baby

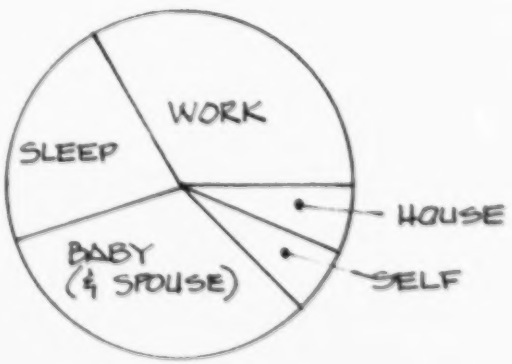


Post-Baby

Depending on your needs, your pie can be divided into more specific pieces. The following example shows a more complete breakdown of the work day.



A third suggestion is drawing a pie to illustrate where you want to spend your time in comparison to where your time is actually spent.



If you're currently on leave, Mom (and/or Dad), develop a pie that shows how your day is spent now and how you anticipate it will be spent once you return to work. If you're expecting your baby, you might want to ask a friend or relative with a new (or not so new) baby to break down a "typical" day with baby for you.

The point of effective time management, then, is achieving the satisfactory completion of jobs you need to do while having time left for the things you want to do. Knowing where your time goes leads directly into the next step of this strategy: setting priorities.

Setting priorities

"So go away cobwebs, dust go to sleep. I'm rocking my baby, and babies don't keep." This sampler saying defines new parents' number one priority--their baby. Everything else will still be there tomorrow (believe it or not), but as many "experienced" parents can tell you, your baby will seem to change daily. Making time with your baby top priority helps you better define other tasks requiring your time and energy.

There are a number of approaches to setting priorities. Begin by taking the pieces of your pie(s) and using those as categories under which to list priorities. For new working parents these seem to be most inclusive:

* baby
* family/friends
* home
* self
* spouse
* work

Add and delete as best fits your needs. In your notebook, remember to both do the following:

1. Under each of the priority areas that you've defined, brainstorm any and all tasks that fit in that category. Include both short and long term activites, being certain not to omit the fun things in life!

2. You'll probably come up with a monumental list for each area. In fact, if you don't, slide back to step one and brainstorm again. By placing some time limits on the tasks you begin to set priorities. Look at four possible placements: future (long-term), bi-weekly, weekly, daily. Depending on the category, some items may appear more than once but try not to duplicate items on the lists.
3. Eliminate, delegate or simplify--in that order. As you assign each activity to a time frame, think twice. Is this a task that could be eliminated completely from your repertoire? Couldn't someone else do this as well--or nearly as well--as you do? Keep in mind the importance of communication when you delegate. Both the task and performance levels, which are your expectations, must be stated clearly. In delegating you may need to lower your standards within reasonable boundaries. And if the job can't be eliminated or delegated, then get it to its simplest form (again, possibly necessitating a lowering of standards or a change in the status quo). At this point, concentrate paring your daily list(s) to no more than three to five items.
4. Prioritize. Accept there will be many days when everything won't get done (so what else is new, right?). Remember that very few things are life (or job) threatening. Dirty dishes won't get you a citation from the health department. Many working parents find good communication with co-workers regarding priorities can be helpful. Each day, then, prioritize the activities you want to complete.
5. Make and post a daily list. Keep the daily home list in full view of spouse, the work list in full view of co-workers. (My daily list goes on the refrigerator or next to the phone). The secrets to successful list making include:
   - crossing off items as they are completed (for a sense of accomplishment)
   - not adding items to the original list. Only cross them

off!

- using the time you save for those things you want to do, not have to do.

6. Follow through. All principles of time management are for naught if the involved parties don't follow through. Keeping a time log, graphing where your time goes, setting priorities-- these are the get ready and get set. Follow through is go. This is why your priority items need to be a manageable number. Feeling overwhelmed during the first two phases paralyzes you and prevents, rather than motivates, activity. Saying, "I'll do it" and actually following the task through to completion are two entirely different matters. This, too, is a potential source of conflict between parents. If your list indicates you'll be cleaning the bathroom, your spouse has the right to expect a clean bathroom sometime that day and vice-versa for what appears on your lists. This leads to the next point:
7. Trust in your spouse and co-workers. If you're switching some responsibilities, help your partner by defining clearly and precisely how you've done the job previously. You may need to let her know, for example, that if she takes the car to Al's Garage because it's the closest, you will be upset because Al is not known for his quality work. Don't hound your spouse or co-worker into completing the job or don't re-do it once it's been completed. Both are demoralizing and discouraging, not to mention aggrevating (and can lead to the infamous, "Next time do it yourself!"). Trust that the best will be done. If the job doesn't meet your standards, you have two alternatives. One: in a non-threatening manner, explain what you'd like to see done the next time. Two: lower your standards. In some families and work situations, number one is decidedly more difficult to pull off than number two. If both of these fail, a re-division of jobs may be in order.

The fine art of juggling

There's a science fiction movie that graphically portrays the devestating effects "When Worlds Collide." The results are no less grave "When Priorities Collide." It's difficult at times not to take your spouse's usurption of your priorities in favor of his/her own personally. You may feel, correctly or note, that you're always the one to give in, always the one being taken advantage of, always the one whose needs take a back seat to your partner's. Sounds a bit stressful, doesn't it?

You may know someone who is a master juggler. The more thrown their way, the better they seem to like it. Their juggling is so successful that an appointment is never missed or a belated birthday card is never sent. However, the addition of a baby often causes even the most skillful juggler to miss a few steps. The "no schedule" schedule so many babies adopt at first is difficult to contend with, especially if you are accustomed to being organized and working on a specific time frame. By rule of "new parent thumb," you can almost expect your baby to need a diaper changer after she's been bundled into the snow suit; to wake up, crying vociferously, as you both rush to get dressed or to change her eating schedule the day you schedule appointments around her old one.

Here's where a revamping of priorities - aka juggling - comes into play. Experience with my own four children has shown it may not be worth the aggrevation to forge on once your baby calls. Crying is a major distraction for most parents. Remember that your baby is your number one priority. If you can't finish what you're doing quickly, it may be far better to stop midstream and attend to your infant. What you had been doing will be waiting for you afterward. Take comfort in the fact that very few new parents are on time for everything. We O'Briens have been at this for nine years now and nothing catastrophic, both at home and work, has resulted from our being late.

Inflexible work settings create much of the pressure dual-career households experience. The mutual support so necessary to a healthy marriage and family becomes increasingly difficult to

provide when each partner is overextended. In your unique situation, both of you are also dealing with the enormous demands of being a new parent. "Giving in" can become a major point of contention, yet there are times when doing just that is extremely appropriate.

There are four parts to successful priority juggling: identification (of what requires juggling), communication, negotiation and resolution. First and foremost, one or both parents need to identify where the potential source of conflict is coming from. This requires you keep track of your individual schedules, posting priorities on visible lists or a family calendar. (I've taken to color coding mine: black for me, red for the kids, blue for Dan.) The more in advance you identify a possible conflict, the more opportunity you have to juggle and arrive at an amenable solution. Once you've identified the oncoming collision of priorities, don't keep it to yourself. The second step is to clearly communicate the problem to your spouse, if possible well before the conflict may occur. Busy schedules tend to change so rapidly this may not always be feasible. Negotiation is the third part and truly represents the juggling stage. Verbalize what your needs are, then listen to your spouse's response. (If you've both already identified the collision, then toss a coin to see who goes first!) Work together toward solving the problem. Too often the negotiation stage is approached with a mind-set that defies mutual solution. You know how you want this problem resolved and never mind what the other party has to say. Coming into negotiations with an open mind and flexible attitude is important, as smooth negotiations lead to successful resolution, part four. You've juggled your way to an alternative that your family is comfortable with. It may not be what you had hoped for, but the best interests of your family were served. That's what juggling is all about.

AN EXAMPLE OF THE FINE ART OF JUGGLING

Part One: In comparing weekly priority lists, Pat and Barb

find they both have scheduled meetings for Tuesday night. Neither one feels they can take their baby, Christy, with them to the meeting.

Part Two: The problem has four sides -

a) neither meeting can be rescheduled
b) both need to attend their meeting
c) Pat gave up his basketball league for Barb last week
d) Barb came home from work early so Pat could work later one evening last week (which means both have recently "given in")

Part Three: During negotiations, Barb suggests they find a sitter for Christy. (Note: No ultimatums are given.)

Pat responds they already have a sitter scheduled for Wednesday and Friday nights, which is beyond the week night "sitter limit" they'd previously agreed on. He asks what Barb's meeting is about.

She explains that hers is a business meeting with a client who is leaving town Wednesday morning. This was the only time they could mutually schedule a meeting.

Pat's meeting is with the community action council, dealing with a new neighborhood park. He's been active in petitioning for the park and has been asked to testify in favor of the proposed bond issue.

"Well..." (from both.)

Who else is going to your meeting? Barb asks. Pat is sure two neighbor couples will also be there. Maybe, Pat muses, they could help him watch Christy during the time he is speaking. Barb reminds him that Christy also might sleep in her stroller during most of the meeting.

Part Four: Pat checks to be sure the neighbors will be attending the meeting and that they wouldn't mind holding Christy, if necessary, while he speaks. Barb thanks him for helping out, which is actually Part Five of the process: outwardly showing/expressing appreciation to the juggler. This can be a verbal, "Thanks" or any number of other little niceties spouses can do for each other. The possibilities are endless . . .!

Earlier in this chapter three facts of life for working parents were listed. Let's add number four. Life without a baby bears little resemblance to life with a baby. This is plain and simple reality. Babies bring joy, a multitude of new experiences and delights, but they alter our perception of reality dramatically. Parents with two week old infants at the Mom and Dad class have said, "We can't remember what life was like without him!"

Being a new parent presents a constant array of challenges. Hopefully the time management strategy has provided you with a tool that will effectively help you meet some of these. Now offered are reality tamers, tried and true suggestions for easing the transition into working parenthood.

"It's already pretty hectic around our place in the mornings," commented one expectant mother during a Mom and Dad class. "It's hard to imagine adding the baby's schedule to ours and still getting to work on time."

If this sounds like your household, there are a number of ways that can make the trips in and out the front door less stressful. First, examine your pre-baby morning schedule. Use the following worksheet to define what you do and the time frame in which you complete your morning routine.

* * * * *

	MOM	DAD
ACTIVITY start complete		
ACTIVITY start complete		
ACTIVITY start complete		
ACTIVITY start complete		
ACTIVITY start complete		

(Example--ACTIVITY: getting out of bed
start at 6:30 when alarm goes off
complete at 6:50 when feet hit the floor)

Add additional activities as needed and then ask yourselves which activities could be started or completed the night before. Could you wash your hair in the evening? Press and lay out your clothing? Make your lunch? Can you simplify parts of your personal grooming routine? Time pared from your morning schedule will find good use when your baby arrives.

At minimum, your baby's morning schedule will include changing, feeding, dressing for outdoors, strapping into car seat, driving to day care, and adjusting to your day care provider from Mom/Dad's arms. (Come-in or live-in help may eliminate some of the above.) Just be doing for and with your baby you are also having

some good interactive time each morning, too! If your baby has a regular schedule, it may be possible to predict when he'll awaken. You can then adapt your time frames to include your baby's care. Divide the tasks of changing and feeding so one parent isn't doing both. If your baby is not schedule oriented, it can make your mornings (and evenings) less predictable and undoubtedly more challenging. Simplifying your own routine may be helpful, as it can provide you a few "extra" minutes. Before your baby arrives or before you return to work, try out your streamlined routine to see how effective it is. Many new parents want time in the morning for more than the requirements listed above. They enjoy talking and playing with their baby before they rush off to work. Leave time for that in your schedule, too!

Other possible reality tamers:

* Pack the diaper bag and put it in the car each evening. You may be able to eliminate a diaper bag altogether by leaving adequate "baby stocks" at day care. These would include a large box of diaposable diapers, baby wipes, two-three sleepers/change of clothing (including undershirts), two bottles and nipples, formula or breastmilk. Remember to update sizes of clothing as your baby grows. Some parents leave a bag of their baby's toys, a special blanket or stuffed animal at day care, also.
* Lay out your baby's clothes for the next day in the evening.
* Mix formula (if you're not leaving breastmilk), pour into a bottle and refrigerate in the evening so it will be ready to be pan-warmed in the morning. (A additional note here about warming bottles in the microwave: this practice is not advocated since microwaves can heat both formula and breastmilk unevenly, leaving open the possibility of scalding your baby's mouth if a "hot spot" is the first thing he drinks. If you do heat a bottle in the microwave, heat it without the nipple screwed on (so steam can't build up), heat it for less time than recommended by the manufacturer and always shake the bottle and test the milk temperature on your hand or wrist before feeding your baby.)

* If your baby awakens "before schedule," put her into her infant seat or on a quilt nearby you. Babies often enjoy being part of the action. Hearing your voices can be soothing and comforting.
* Switch weeks of "baby responsibility." One week Mom is in charge of getting your baby ready and taking him to and from day care; the next week it's Dad's turn. During your "off" week, sleep in an extra fifteen minutes, have a little longer breakfast, come home and read a section of the paper after work. If day care is not convenient to both parents' work sites, this may not be possible, but a sharing of getting your baby ready certainly could be feasible.
* Try not to assign double duties and let the parent not picking up your baby start dinner, run errands, etc.
* Keep to your contracted work day. For some working parents, an eight hour workday is an eight hour workday--period. For others eight hours often stretch into ten or more on the job. Each person's work situation varies, dependent on the nature of his job. Use good time management techniques at work as well as home to keep working hours to their minimum. Eventually you may find yourselves better able and more comfortable with working extended hours. During your transition into working parenthood, emphasize the importance of having parenthood come first, working second.
* Solicit help from co-workers. Can you delegate tasks to a competent, willing fellow employee?
* Work a shorter day. Chapter Two defined part-time, job sharing, and flex-time. If these aren't feasible, could you cut one hour from your day--albeit temporarily--to arrive one-half hour later and leave one-half hour earlier?
* Confide in your boss. This area needs to be treaded on gently and with great discretion, but if you're finding yourself backed into the corner at work and at home, look for ways of keeping work stresses to a minimum. One way is letting your supervisor know you're attempting an eight hour work day. Perhaps trading off by bringing some work home

occasionally can be negotiated. Depending on your work situation, this may not be a realistic suggestion. It's sometimes easier to contend with a grumpy spouse than a dissatisfied boss. You know your family will pitch in and keep dinner warm. They won't fire you, while your employer might. Once again remember that you, and working parents with children of all ages, need to be your own advocates and insist on a workplace more responsive to the needs of families.

Buying your way out of many household chores can be well worth the cost. While your budget may already feel pinched, sometimes spending money on a time saver provides a psychological boost as well as a practical method of dealing with the everyday tasks that often swamp us. A friend who used a cleaning service weekly would have her two children wait in the car a few minutes on "cleaning day" while she walked through and savored the look and smell of her house completely cleaned by someone else. Consider the following possibilities:

- a microwave oven, which many working parents find indispensable
- an automatic dishwasher - same as the microwave
- timed appliances (coffee pot, crockpot, oven)
- disposable diapers OR a diaper service. Diaper for diaper, a diaper service is usually less expensive than disposables (at least according to the Diaper Service people).
- ready-to-feed formula, which is more expensive, but the closest thing to demand feeding since nursing, requiring little or no preparation time
- convenience foods rather than cooking from scratch. Some working parents cook in batches on the weekend, freezing portions for a quick meal during the week. The microwave comes in handy here.
- a cleaning service, which can be an enormous stress reliever. This particular service industry is expanding rapidly as the demand rises. As an alternative to a cleaning service, consider

- teenagers! Junior and senior high schoolers have an insatiable need for extra money. You can provide them with a semi-steady stream of income in a number of ways. Responsible teenagers can clean house, babysit evenings/on weekends/all summer, and run errands. Some young adults can be a marvelous extra set of hands around dinner time, coming in daily to pick up the house, set the table, perhaps even start dinner before you arrive home or under your direct supervision. Either way will leave you with more time for your baby. (See Chapter Six for information on hiring a babysitter.)
- shop by catalogs, telephone or through the mail for items delivered to your home (usually for an additional charge), eliminating running time
- send out laundry, shirts, dry cleaning and have the clean clothes delivered
- one-stop shopping to rearrange your shopping lists so everything can be purchased in one stop. The time spent running from one place to another in hopes of saving a few dollars can be better spent with your baby!

Energy and stress management

"If you want something done, give it to a busy person" is an axiom that all too often applies to working parents. We juggle, balance, run skip and jump our way to exhaustion! The next chapter will deal with the interpersonal survival skills needed for stress management. The following few suggestions will help maintain your energy (and sanity) level before hitting the proverbial bottom of the barrel.

* Eliminate. What can you stop doing at work and at home without major ramifications? List at least two things at each place and let them go!
* Simplify. What tasks tie you in knots? Can you break down these activities into simpler steps? Better yet, can you delegate the tasks to someone else?

* Keep to the contract both at work and at home. Previous discussion centered on the need to do this at the workplace, but it's equally important to do this at home. Designate a beginning and ending to your day at home. Don't stay up late to do an extra load of laundry or get up early to wash dishes.
* Learn to say "NO!" Don't volunteer to head a new committee, have the next family gathering at your home, or take on an extra project at work. For awhile, at least, say "NO!"
* Nutrition. Working parents are notorious meal skippers. Three well balanced meals can make a substantial difference in your energy level, as well as your susceptibility to illness. Good nutrition directly affects your ability to cope with stress and is especially important for nursing mothers.
* Sleep. No matter how many furnaces you run on, sooner or later they'll need refueling. That's what sleep does for you. Don't feel guilty about napping on the weekend, going to bed early or sleeping in late. A staple in the O'Brien household is the weekend switch approach to catching up on sleep. One parent gets up with the baby during the night and in the morning Friday/Saturday, while the other does the same on Saturday/Sunday.
* Recreation. Many working parents eliminate recreation from their scheduled routine. Again, recreation/exercise increases your ability to successfully manage stress. There are a number of exercise programs on television, some broadcast early in the morning. If you own a VCR you can tape these or purchase any number of exercise casettes, including some designed specifically for pregnant/postpartum women.
* Take an uninterrupted fifteen minutes. It's amazing what you can accomplish in just fifteen minutes without interruptions. Some suggestions include:
  - take your baby for a quick, energetic walk
  - play with your baby

- sit and rock with him
- start dinner, keeping your baby nearby
- pack tomorrow's diaper bag, lay out your baby's clothing
- water the plants
- do a quick "pick-up" of the house (vacuum one room, wash dishes, clean the bathtub)
- make a phone call (use a timer)
- draw up the grocery list
- prioritize a daily or weekly list
- pay a few bills
- talk with your spouse about ANYTHING
- make a necessary appointment (doctor, dental)
- clean off your desk
- mark magazine articles that you'll want to read later OR actually read one
- sit down, put your feet up and RELAX!

* An afternoon off. In some professions this is unofficially recognized as a mental health day. There's nothing wrong with a morning or entire day off, either. Read, nap, catch up on correspondence, soak in a hot tub or do something less sedentary. You'll come up with an idea or two that will use the time.

Reality tamers

"This, too, shall pass" is often the anthem of new parents. You find yourselves working hard to make this transition into working parenthood, wondering if any of this will ever pay off. Many of the suggestions in this chapter can have far ranging positive effects for your ongoing life as a working parent with a toddler, preschooler, and teenager. The roller coaster ride of parenthood, with its peaks and valleys, eventually becomes routine and in the case of many working parents, even enjoyable. Take it one step at a time and savor each moment because they, too, shall pass.

CHAPTER SIX

Interpersonal Survival Skills

With apologies to my dearly loved sister-in-law Lynn, I often tell this story in the Mom and Dad classes:

"When Dan and I were first married, we lived near his brother and sister-in-law who at that time had four children, ages four to thirteen. Jim and Lynn worked full time, as did we. I often wondered why, when I called Lynn in the evenings, she seemed to constantly be doing laundry. Why couldn't she just do it all on Sunday evenings like I did? If we went shopping together on the weekend or in the evening, one or more of the children came along with us. Now that didn't bother me, and Lynn truly enjoyed their company--but I vowed that if and when I had children, I'd get away alone to do my shopping. Well, the other night (not a Sunday), right after I threw one load into the washer and another into the dryer, I managed a quick trip to the grocery store almost by myself. Molly and Bridget stayed home with Dan while Tom and Maggie accompanied me. Things certainly have come full circle."

What Lynn was doing--and I didn't realize at the time-- was following principles of good time and energy management. She was also using time for multiple purposes. The shopping got done, Lynn and Sean (or Mike/Steve/Kelly) had some special time alone, and the sisters-in-law had an opportunity to visit. The interpersonal strengthenings ran parallel to a rather practical activity. This is especially true in the case of relationship building with your infant. Working parents soon master the art of doing more than one thing at a time. "I can make dinner and make Carrie smile at the same time," one new mother confided. "Instead of watching TV or listening to the stereo while I cook, I chatter away to my daughter about any number of things. She's a great listener!"

This chapter, then, is about building. In the case of your baby, we'll be discussing the laying of strong foundations. Ways you can build on your marriage foundation and perhaps even expand your relationship will be examined. Family members and friends

that play an important role in your lives as new working parents require special attention to nurture these relationships. Finally let's promote you to you: re-building a relationship with yourself.

The new baby: "what labor gives you lasts for a lifetime"

*from author Celeste Phillips

It's an absolutely amazing transformation, one that takes place not effortlessly. After hours of labor, you enter the birthing room or delivery area as a pregnant couple and leave as Mother and Father. It may take awhile for those new titles to fit comfortably. Perhaps you feel awkward handling your baby, diapering him or bathing him. Once you're home, you creep into the nursery and lean over the crib in wonder and awe, marvelling at what you've done. You've created a new life; this person has moved in with some very specific items on his agenda, an agenda that will continue to expand for the rest of your lives.

Establishing a good relationship with the baby is a universal concern shared by all parents, new and not so new. You recognize the importance of forming a life-long bond with your infant and may be troubled by the fact that you don't have all the time in the world to accomplish this staggering task. Your job, each other, the household-- these and many more demands steal away the time you'd rather be spending with your new son or daughter. The time and energy management strategy from Chapter Five should provide you with ways of garnering additional "baby hours." In laying the foundations of the parent-child relationship, consider the following suggestions:

1. Develop a mutual philosophy of parenting. Being a parent is, in my opinion, one of the if not the toughest job in the world. There is no formal training for becoming a mother and father. You don't have to take any specialized courses, pass any exams or successfully complete an

internship. Like it or not, we approach parenting with ideas rooted in our own upbringing. During the years we spent with our families we watched, listened, studied what our parents did and how they did it. By the time we were thirteen (well, maybe sixteen) we decided that we knew it all, Mom and Dad had done it all wrong and in fact it was a miracle any of us turned out as well as we did! Like many new parents, perhaps you'll return home and apologize to your own folks for the foibles of your adolesence. Depending on your background, then, you each may have a very different opinion on the ways you want to act and interact with your child. You may have spent long hours discussing this very topic during your pregnancy or even before. On the other hand, talking about how you want to raise your baby may not come to pass until your baby is born. It's never too early to sift through your own upbringings, various child care/child rearing books, what you see friends, neighbors and family doing and develop your own philosophy of parenting. A joint, consistent approach, regardless of whose ideas or studies it's based on, is important for your entire family. Being at loggerheads over parental decisions adds more stress to your lives. Each time you face a problem (read: crisis), no matter what age your child is, it helps to know that you're in this together, that Mom will back up what Dad says, and vice-versa. The days of "Wait until your father gets home" are hopefully long gone.

There are a substantial number of child care/child rearing books available today. I asked the childbirth and parent education instructors I work with to list their five favorite books; a compilation of those titles appears in the Appendix One, along with a variety of books that represent a wide range of approaches to this topic. Check out these books--and others--at your public library first. Then purchase the two or three you find best represent the parenting philosophies of your family.

2. What do you want for your child? When your fantasies take

over and you envision this tiny bundle five, ten, twenty years from now, what kind of a person do you see? The challenge, then, is to get your baby from here to there or as author Wenda Wardell Marrone says, turn your baby into a successful child. Marrone (Pregnant While You Work) defines a successful child as a "kid who is going to make it." Author Cynthia Pincus (Double Duties: An Action Plan for the Working Wife) furthers this concept by exploring what we owe our children: participation in their lives, a sense of self-esteem, maturity, joy, a sense of accomplishment, and sensitivity. To this add the many things you probably don't want or don't owe your child: being fearful of the world, a lack of discipline and no respect for authority. Take the opportunity to put these ideas in writing, keeping in mind that we all have limitations. Creating an environment where you child can be the best possible person, given his capabilities and interests, is what you're striving toward.

3. Establish routines. Sometimes the hectic aspects of life are the most exhilerating. A baby brings with him enough upheaval that a little enforced routine begins to look very appealing. Many children and their families thrive on routine, relying on certain activities happening, come what may, on a regular basis. While this may be difficult initially with an infant, a daily routine when you're back to work is almost mandatory. Routine can force you to spend the time you want to spend with your baby. The type of routine being proposed here is not taking your before baby lifestyle and examining it to find a few holes in which to fit your baby's needs. It is a totally new creation, one established to meet your needs as a working parent family. It is a routine which will change as you all grow together.

However, babies do exist who absolutely defy setting a schedule or routine. Predictable is not a word you'd use in describing this child. This can be more than a little exasperating

at times. From personal experience, I did find it easier to accomodate my "scheduleless" babies as much as possible, working with what parts of the family routine that were more acceptable to my babies than others. In the long run, I found that an established routine was (and continues to be) an important factor for successful family functioning.

On the other hand, an occasional break in the routine can be a life saver. Be forewarned that schedule loving babies often react negatively to any variation from daily plan. Skipping an afternoon nap may not faze one child, while others make their parents pay for such indiscretions the rest of the day. Some routines used by working parents include:

* Arranging evening hours around your baby. Feed your baby first, then have your own dinner after she's been fed. If she goes to bed early in the evening, you might wait to eat until she's asleep. Any evening activities should include your baby, as much as is practical. This includes household chores, shopping trips, etc. Some parents refuse to take part in any after-work plans that don't include bringing their child along.
* Establishing a bedtime ritual. Starting this during infancy may prove to be one of the wisest long-term routines you establish. Dinner, play time, bath and then quiet/story time ease into bedtime. Many dads are responsible for most of these baby jobs. Quiet time can include nursing or a bottle, rocking, singing, holding, cuddling. At about nine months to a year you can add a story. Choose cardboard or cloth books with brightly colored pictures and one sentence (or less) to a page. (One of the things I hope you'll want to give your child is a lifelong love of reading. One of the best things you can do to encourage that is to read, read, READ to him!)
* Walking on the weekends. Set aside time on the weekend, preferably while your baby is awake, for a leisurely buggy/stroller walk. This is one of those multiple use of time activities. Both parents benefit from exercise,

one-on-one time with each other, and family time with their baby. Point out items of interest to your child as you stroll: where the neighbors live, various animals, flowers, etc. Don't be afraid to lift your baby out of the buggy to get a closer look. During the winter you might bundle your baby into a front or back pack instead of the stroller, or take your walk at an enclosed shopping mall, museum, art institute, wherever.

* Talking to your baby. Tell him about your day, who just called on the phone and how much you love him or his Mommy (or Daddy). Early on you'll notice how your baby attends to your face, listening to the voices he became familiar with while still in the womb. Later he'll talk back to you, carrying on a conversation that you'll be enthralled with. While you're in the car going to or from day care, at home while cooking or cleaning, turn down the background noise and chatter with your baby. It's stimulating for your child to be in a variety of places, hearing different sounds, watching various colors, shapes and activites. Babies can cry because they're bored or lonely. Being with you prevents this and gives you all special time together.

Mom and Dad? Whatever happened to just you and me?

Pregnant couples sometimes savor the final few weeks of pregnancy, knowing its the final time they'll really be alone together for perhaps the next decade or two. Even if your baby sleeps quite a bit, her physical presence manifests itself in any number of ways (i.e. the burp cloth lying on the couch, a misplaced pacifier on the dining room table). Mentally it's nearly impossible to keep her and her needs far from your thoughts. New parents from one childbirth education class talked about their first night out following their son's birth. Two week old Alicia was left in Grandma's tender loving care while Lynette and Glen went out to dinner. Guess who they talked about all evening?

The marriage relationship is one that passes through many

stages over the years you have together. Each couple handles these passages and changes differently. For some the changes prove difficult and challenging, not always resolved positively. For others each stage is approached as an opportunity for mutual growth which, in the long run, strengthens not only the individuals but their marriage and family relationships as well.

The move from being a couple to a trio is not always an easy one, even when the third person was long planned for and well loved. One of the most taxing transitions a couple makes is the move into parenthood. Cowen and Cowen, University of California at Berkeley psychologists, indicate three areas new parents find difficult: a sense of self (where did the time for me go?); the couple's role relationship (who does what) and the role transition (from spouse to parent). Couples in the Cowens study who realistically anticipated changes in time schedules still expressed dissatisfaction with the reduction in leisure time that occurred following their baby's birth. Such changes are exacerbated by the additional transition you are experiencing, from spouses to parents to working parents!

Remember that all three roles need nurturing and support, especially from each other. A number of times this concept has been emphasized; it's no less a requirement in any of these relationships. Many studies show the most crucial source of support for a working mother lies with her husband. Dad, you need to actively show support for your wife's job, taking satisfaction in her achievements as well as your own. This is not the time to fuel any power/status career related feuds between you. Accept that both jobs are equally worthwhile and make your support practical as well as emotional. An increase in household help from you makes these transitions less stressful. You have opportunities for interaction with your baby that your father never had, leading to a broadening of your own identity and terms of self-fulfillment.

Mom, recognize that a working parent spouse (you) can be a significant threat to your husband's identity. The traditional father's role as the single breadwinner may no longer be feasible, but it is the role model we grew up with. It is still difficult to

accept that one paycheck is not sufficient (in many cases) to support the family. New fathers find themselves torn between the demands of job and family. As mentioned previously, they too experience guilt feelings. Since you're busy working and juggling family demands, you're less available to provide career support to your husband. Many American businesses continue to view women in the role of "corporate wife." It's important to be supportive of his job requirements.

During the transition first into parenthood and then into working parenthood, be aware that one difficulty lies in the fact that you have many models for being a good worker, many for being a good parent, but few for being a good working parent. You may find yourselves in a new somewhat complex network of roles and role relationships. As shown in the Cowens' study, communications between you may change. They're apt to be sporadic and more to the point, which in some cases causes conflict to surface. The communication model portrays one person clearly expressing his view (not assuming the listener knows what he's thinking) while the other is actively listening to what that person says rather than planning a retort. Making time to communicate--and doing it well--then becomes vital to your healthy, hopefully growing relationship.

* Call each other during lunch hour or breaks. If necessary, put the call into your appointment book or on your daily priority list. You might try eating lunch at your desks while conversing on the phone.
* Meet for lunch during the work week. Face to face is decidedly nicer than over the phone.
* Leave work 1/2 hour early and meet to have a treat, go for a walk, do some shopping. Leave even earlier and have dinner out together, before you pick up your baby at day care.
* Make it a "fast-food" dinner, spend time together as a family, then put your baby to bed. Leave the house in whatever state it's in, don't turn on the television, take the phone off the hook and spend the evening communicating

however you'd like.

* Don't neglect going out alone on the weekends. Parents with new babies still need a social life!

To get away in the evenings or on weekends, you'll probably need to employ the services of a babysitter. The young ladies (and gentlemen) who are members of the babysitting profession can be life and sanity preservers. The next section offers information on finding a good babysitter.

"Can you sit Saturday night?"

Much like finding a good day care provider, this can be a time consuming exercise with an extremely valuable outcome. The babysitter you're looking for is a girl or boy who will respect your wishes, treat your home as well as you do, and care for your baby with love and a high degree of maturity. Yes, these kids do exist, but no, they no longer hire out for fifty cents an hour.

If you're currently pregnant it's not too early to begin checking out the babysitting possibilities in your neighborhood. If you're already parents, finding a good babysitter may be the top priority on one or more of your "to-do" lists. Depending on where you live and the composition of families in your area, babysitters may be easy or difficult to find. Try the following suggestions:

1. Ask other families in the neighborhood who babysits for them. Some areas, especially newer suburban subdivisions, are populated by families with young children. Consequently teenagers of babysitting age might be at a premium; the other parents hoarde their names like gold. Still, these families are the best point of origin when looking for sitters.
2. If your day care provider or day care center is close to your home, the adults there may have some suggestions. Check with other families using your day care facility, too.
3. Try the local middle school, junior high or high school and call the guidance/counseling office. Not all schools are

able to assist you, but many will post a notice or refer students to you. A good resource might be the home economics teacher, as many home ec departments offer child development or child psychology classes. Some high schools run a nursery school as a part of these classes. Before calling the home ec teacher, check with the high school office to see if such a program is offered. Don't overlook asking boys about their willingness to sit. Some teenage males may be hesitant about staying with a baby, while others have no qualms about sitting an infant.

4. You may be able to post a notice on the bulletin board at your church or other local churches, or in the church newsletter/bulletin. Try the church secretary again! If your church has a youth group, get the group leader's name and ask him/her for suggestions.
5. Some churches/schools sponsor Scout troops. Try calling the leaders of these troops and ask for suggestions.
6. If your area school district has a community education program, check the class offerings for children/teenagers. There may be a class about babysitting (there is a certification program offered through the Red Cross); get the name of the course instructor and ask her for suggestions.
7. Check the bulletin board at the grocery store, community center, park recreation building, or wherever an enterprising teenager might post a notice that s/he is available for babysitting. Don't forget to post notices yourself.
8. If you live in a neighborhood with many young families, there may be a babysitting co-op in operation. These function in a variety of ways, most often on a point system. You get points for babysitting other children and use points by having someone watch your child. Some parents prefer this system for two reasons. First, it doesn't cost anything but your time. Second, you know that other parents are responsible for your child. If no co-op

exists, you might want to consider setting one up yourself.

Most young people begin babysitting (for families other than their own) around age twelve. While that may seem a little young in terms of handling an infant, many new parents have had good experiences with both boys and girls that age. One benefit of having a "younger" sitter is that s/he will usually be available to babysit for a number of years-- at least until the discovery of part-time jobs and the opposite sex. That sitter comes to know your family and home quite well, which is a comfortable and reassuring feeling for all of you. Just as with your day care provider, you'll want to meet the babysitter before s/he actually stays with your baby. Have her come over for an hour or so in the afternoon while your baby is awake. Let her hold, change and perhaps feed your baby with you nearby. Tell the babysitter about your baby, how you handle him when he cries, which way he prefers to sleep, whether or not the swing settles him down. Do ask her for the names and phone numbers of other families that she has babysat for previously. Discuss fees during this meeting; it's wise to consult other parents who employ babysitters beforehand to find out what the going rate is. Remember that an older teenager can make at least minimum wage working for the local fast-food establishment, so asking him/her to babysit for less than a dollar an hour probably won't get you many takers.

You might want to walk the sitter home that afternoon (or drive her, as the case may be) and then go in to meet her parents. The parents of my babysitters have always appreciated knowing who we were, what we expected of their child, and that Dan and I were responsible parents. (After all, this is their baby sitting with your baby!) Do check with them as to how they feel about her sitting, if they have time restrictions on how long she can be out, if they prefer you to pick her up and bring her home.

The first time you have a new sitter, schedule her arrival at least one-half hour before you plan to leave. Use this time to show her around your house, even if you've already done so in a preliminary meeting. Explain how various appliances work, where

the baby necessities are kept, etc. Discuss the house rules: what she can and can't have to eat, if she can have a friend(s) over, use of the telephone, television and stereo. Some parents who are expecting to return home well past ten p.m. don't mind if the sitter falls asleep, while others prefer that she remains awake until they get back. For the most part use the babysitter to do just that--stay with your baby. Don't expect her to do dishes or other housecleaning unless you've discussed that in advance and are willing to pay her more.

If you haven't already listed emergency numbers near your phone, now is the time to do so. Make sure your sitter knows who to call in case of an emergency. Leave a number where you can be reached, even if it's a movie theatre. Some sitters appreciate a written set of directions that would include the baby's schedule for while you're gone and information covering contingencies (i.e. you expect him to sleep the entire time you're gone; what should your sitter do if the baby wakes up? rock him? give him a bottle? let him cry it out? how long do you let him cry? should she change him?). Somewhere near the phone you'll also want to leave the emergency authorization below:

AUTHORIZATION

In case of an emergency, I give permission for my child to be treated by a physician or hospital.

Signature of parent or guardian

Without such authorization an emergency room might refuse to treat your child until you can be reached to grant permission for treatment. Of course in life-threatening situations this wouldn't hold true, however in other cases (stitches, broken bones) this may be the case. I instruct our babysitters that should anything serious happen, they should get our children taken care of first, call their mothers second (if they're home and readily accessible)

and track us down third.

Finally, before you leave tell your sitter if you've left any appliances or lights on in other parts of the house (a dryer running in the basement can sound pretty scary if you don't know what it is). Tell her what time you expect to be home and show her how to lock the door behind you. Then go out and have a good time! If you feel the need, call while you're gone to reassure yourselves that everything is going well. Certainly you'd want to call if you're going to be later than originally planned.

New parents often take the graduated leave approach to going out without their baby. They get a sitter for a half-hour while they go out for a walk, then for an hour while they do some shopping, then the length of time it takes to see a movie. Don't feel guilty if you find yourselves thinking and/or talking about your baby the first few times you're out alone. Gradually as you become more comfortable in your role as parents, you'll spend less time doing this and will soon find yourselves part of the weekly scramble to find a babysitter for Saturday night!

Now that you've got a sitter

Finding a good babysitter, for some new parents, opens new vistas on the social scene. "With babysitters," one wise friend said, "anything is possible!" The acquisition of a babysitter may herald your re-entry into the "outside" world and the circle of friends you temporarily left behind.

There are some friendships you have forged over the years that withstand the test of time, distance, and the addition of a baby. You may find your social contacts and friendships now divide into two categories: the "haves" (as in children) and the "have-nots." While before you had little in common with the first group, you now have an almost inexhaustible number of topics to discuss. In fact, a stronger bond of friendship can be forged among you because of your children. Depending on the nature of the individuals involved, you may find yourselves spending less time with friends in the second category. You have given up a certain amount of

freedom and spontenaity by having a baby, which can limit what you formerly did together. Some childless couples grow weary of hearing what the baby is doing now, how tired you are because the baby still gets up in the middle of the night, and other baby specific topics. They don't appreciate your wanting to bring the baby along to the restaurant and can't understand the need to plan a week in advance what night you'll be going out so you can get a sitter.

Changing friendships can be stressful at a time when you're already undergoing a number of transitions in your lives. You might find it easier to socialize with the "haves" for awhile because they're experiencing the same set of circumstances, so there may be less pressure in that relationship. When your baby gets fussy, they understand and may try to help out by comforting him for awhile. If she spits up, it's no big deal. Many friendships formed during the early parenting years nurture and sustain the participants for decades to come.

Don't totally neglect your friends without children, however. Be sensitive to their needs and choose activities to participate in where you can easily leave your baby behind. The common ground that drew you into a friendship to begin with is probably still there. Go back to those areas and concentrate on them. There will be times when you'll want to be with people who don't fill an evening's conversation with discussion of what child development books you've been reading and where the best buys on baby clothes are (in addition to other topics, of course!).

Still another set of changing roles come into focus with family members. It is not uncommon for new parents to question their own relationship with their parents. "Advice" from grandparents may sometimes be less than welcome, but how do you gently tell your own mother than you don't agree with what she says? Both "Dear Abby" and "Ask Ann Landers" have made fortunes addressing this issue and appear to agree that there's no easy answer. Friends may not be quite as forward as family in giving unsolicited "helpful hints" regarding childrearing. My sister and I have breastfed our collective eight children; all were healthy,

thriving infants. Yet as soon as any one of them would cry, Grandpa said, "She's hungry. Give that kid a bottle." While we knew that wasn't necessary, it was still somewhat disconcerting to have your father think you were intentionally starving your own child!

A decided source of conflict arises when it's primarily your spouse's parents or family who are the unwanted advice givers. This puts both of you in a precarious position, especially if the comments are made while your spouse is out of the room. If you've discussed a mutual philosophy of parenting, you can present a united front and know that decision to do what is being questioned or advised against was a "we" decision, rather than an "I."

How you handle such situations is perhaps dependent on a number of factors. Discuss together how much this is bothering you and what, if anything, you want to do about it. Having confidence in your own skills as a parent can ease the tension. You're the ones who have the most intense contact with your baby, who know him the best, whom he relies on to have his needs met. Letting unsolicited advice go in one ear and out the other may be a successful approach. Some parents, be they your own parents or other family members who also have children, feel some innate sense of obligation whenever they're around new parents to share their own experiences. Rather than creating an uncomfortable atmosphere for all by confrontation tactics, filter through what's being said, use what you find helpful and discard the rest. You might ask for advice on certain issues. Sometimes this diffuses while other times it only opens the floodgates. For some new parents the best approach is a direct approach. Tell the person that while they are loved, the extra little hints aren't helping in the way they are intended.

In some families this isn't a problem. And for many family members, the addition of a baby is a confirmation that the family line will go on. It brings people closer together, giving them a sense of continuity, more of a sense of family. A baby brings into the family joy, a sharing of the love that strengthens the family ties.

Re-introducing you to you

With all the role changes, lifestyle variations, personal and professional transitions, is it any wonder new parents often give up both time for and a sense of self once their baby is born? They immerse themselves first in the new little person, then gradually spend moments with each other, and finally move back into the working world. A few months down the line comes the stark realization that it's certainly been a long time since they did anything for themselves. Sometimes this insight hits when they're feeling depressed, angry, exhausted, and frustrated. They recognize that a very important piece of them is missing and that it needs to be replaced. It's wonderful to be known as Ms Andrus at work, Casey's mother at daycare, and Mama or Honey at home, but what happened to me, Kathy?

She's still there--or he's still there. You just need to be re-introduced. Re-draw your pie from Chapter Five and enlarge the piece that has your name on it. In terms of building and maintaining healthy relationships, none of them can happen unless you are in good enough shape, both mentally and physically, to be part of the foundation. Recognize that time for yourself is a positive part of a well-rounded lifestyle. No guilt feelings should be attached to taking time away from some other places in your life so that you can nourish this special relationship. Your entire family will be much better off with a person who's happy with him/herself. The following suggestions will aid in finding time for yourself.

* TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF. In a number of places you've been encouraged to eat correctly, get enough sleep, not spread yourself too thin, and say "no." Assess your lifestyle routine: have you fallen into poor habits concerning eating, sleeping, exercise? Perhaps this sounds like your mother, but this advice for working parents is particularly appropriate.
* Ease up on social obligations. Maintaining sociability is

important for new parents, but not to the exclusion of time for one's self. The early months with a new baby are not the time for extravagant dinner parties, large family gatherings in your home, or a highly active social calendar. Use a weekend evening to spend time alone occasionally. When friends or family want to see the baby, suggest you visit in their homes rather than their coming to you (which usually means time spent cleaning and perhaps cooking).

* Maintain outside interests. If you've had a substantial number of hobbies or been involved in professional/social organizations and other outside interests, it may be impossible to devote time and energy to all of them now that you're a working parent. Rather than do many of them poorly or completely relinquish these out of frustration, prioritize and keep up on one, perhaps two if your family schedule can handle it.
* Treat yourself occasionally. Such treats needn't be extravagant or costly. It's doing something just because you wanted to, like reading a novel rather than a work-related report or calling a friend simply to chat. Spend a little extra to buy that new sweater you've been eyeing. Be nice to the one person you too often neglect - yourself.
* Get away alone. Set aside a block of time, at least forty-five minutes to an hour, where you need answer to no one but yourself. This time is to be uninterrupted.

You may be wondering if most of the information presented in this chapter isn't somewhat contradictory! On the one hand, you're being advised to spend most of your time with your your baby. The next section then advises you to spend time with each other and friends. Finally, all of this seems to be thrown aside as you're encouraged to spend time by yourself! What you're actually learning to do is balance all the pieces of your pie into a harmonious combination. Granted there are times when you will feel as if you don't lead just a fragmented lifestyle but in fact it's

moved into splinters! The important thing is identifying which pieces need nurturing and then actively working toward bringing those into the forefront.

We're in this together

As working parents you are truly today's pioneers. Mothers and fathers have always worked outside of their homes, but not in such large scale and not carrying the burden placed on today's new working parents. In fact, there has been almost a 250% increase in the number of two parents/two paycheck families in the last twenty-five years! Societal expectations are often exceeded by self-expectations. In many cases it's no longer acceptable just to do well; only the best will suffice. Media advertisements show us we can reach the highest rung on the work ladder, have gifted and talented children, a loving and sexually exciting marriage, a vibrant social life and feel totally self-fulfilled, full of pep and energy at day's end. Intellectually we accept that such families exist only in the minds of advertising executives, yet that doesn't stop us from pursuing at least pieces of that American dream. It's truly fortunate that we have our babies, each other, friends, family and ourselves to maintain sanity and a sense of order in our lives. Looking around and seeing others forging smoother paths ahead encourages us to promote changes in the status quo for those yet to follow. We draw the strength to make such changes from the relationships we've built and continue to expand.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Not for working fathers "only"

"Career moms worry more than dads" reads the banner in USA Today. Columnist Ellen Goodman tells us the international dilemmas faced by working parents are called the Problem of Women in the Soviet Union. Multitudes of women's magazines regularly feature articles advising how to get your husband to help out around the house, take care of the children, be more supportive of Mom's career. But male oriented publications seldom promote pieces about the problems working fathers face. Have you seen an article about infant day care in GQ or Esquire?

Over the past three years that I've been gathering information for this book, I've tried to zero in on the difficulties faced by working parents, not just working mothers. I've spent as much, if not more, time carefully listening to what expectant and new fathers have had to say. And given the opportunity, a substantial number of these men have shared their concerns, their difficulties, their problems. They've convinced me that, especially among new parents, fathers face each and every issue along with their wives. Granted in some situations the new mothers still shoulder the burden, but for the most part new fathers are carrying their own pieces of the parcel. This chapter, then, is designed to address the issues raised by expectant and new working fathers. Hopefully it will provide you, Dad, with a forum or outlet to express your own ideas. In keeping with the rest of the book, however, it's not for working fathers only.

Before the baby arrives - thoughts from some expectant fathers

"What our financial situation will be"

"Finding good, affordable day care"

"Spending adequate time with my baby"

These three are the concerns most often expressed, in a variety of ways, by the fathers-to-be I've talked with. These dads

obviously have had a large involvement in making the working parent decision. Many parents did consider having Mom stay home with the baby and in most situations the primary determiner, at least from Dad's viewpoint, was the family's financial status. "I would like my wife to stay home with the baby permanently," one expectant father wrote on a survey, "but we simply can't afford that." A number of dads worried that even where their spouses planned on returning to work, they would change their minds during leave time. "It would make my income, as the father, that much more critical," explained one father. "Two incomes eases the pressure on all of us." A second aspect of financial responsibility that many expectant fathers voiced concern about is the high cost of infant day care. "I'm well aware of the economics of child rearing; the first financial burden the baby will add to our lives is day care costs," another father wrote. One father from a Mom and Dad class used the financial worksheet in conjunction with his family budgeting system to examine the pros and cons of two incomes. He concluded, "It looks like we lose either way. In our situation the determining factor will be my wife's desire to keep working."

During the father's only discussion in a childbirth education class, the talk turned to finding day care. "Is there such a thing as quality day care?" a dad asked. Many fathers-to-be echoed the concern over finding quality, reliable, affordable day care. A number of men had talked to friends, relatives and co-workers regarding the traumas of finding and keeping a good day care provider. The scarcity of infant care is often foremost on fathers' minds. "I'm worried we'll be forced to leave the baby in a less than an optimal situation because that will be our only option. We can't afford the cost of some day care providers." Dads had obviously done their research on the types of infant care currently available as many expressed a preference for one type of care over the others. Another worry was what one dad called "fly-by-night" day care: providers who stay with babies (in any of the situations) for a few weeks, then abruptly tender their notice. "I've seen that happen quite a bit to both women and men at work," said one father.

Some expectant fathers seemed to have a realistic appraisal of what becoming a working father would mean to them, as many men talked about time and energy demands. "Will I have the energy to give my child the attention s/he deserves and still be able to carry out household chores and work full time?" wrote one father. Another dad knew their family's mornings and evenings were already "too full" even before their baby was born. Fathers-to-be not only worried about their own time and energy limitations, but those of their spouse as well. "She's over-scheduled as it is," on dad said. "It's going to be difficult for her to re-vamp her lifestyle to find space for the baby." Then he added, "I suppose I'll be helping out a little more at home." For most of these dads their pending involvement with child care seemed to be a given, something they were anticipating eagerly rather than dreading or fearing.

A minority of the fathers indicated they had no concerns about becoming a working parent family. "I figure it will all work out, just like other changes we've faced," one expectant father told me. Some indicated they had spoken with new fathers who assured them lifestyle changes would be minimal. Still others recognized there would be disruptions in the family status quo, but they were somewhat looking forward to them and didn't term these "concerns." Said one father, "I'm not painting a rosy picture but it's not all doom and gloom, either. A baby will mean some changes - period."

And now that the baby's here...

I've been fortunate in following a large number of couples from childbirth education classes through to a postpartum class reunion where both parents reflected on life pre and post baby. "I can't believe how much our lives have changed," is a phrase heard innumerable times. One good friend and new father said, "I can't remember what life was like without him - and that was only two short months ago!"

Working fathers have shared specific concerns which mirror those they had before their baby's birth and a number that surfaced once they made the transition into working parenthood. Perhaps the

major concern at that point are the many aspects of day care. "Finding adequate day care has been difficult, not only with respect to finding a wholesome, stimulating atmosphere for our child, but also in finding such a day care at a convenient distance from our home," wrote a new father. A small number of families had made a switch in day care providers after a short period of time. Wrote one father, "Our first day care provider wouldn't tell us anything about what happened during the day except `He was okay.' We found another fast." Still others expressed discomfort at what they perceived as the day care provider's tacit disapproval of their leaving the baby. "I don't think she (the day care provider) understands we both like working," indicated a new dad. For a number of fathers the concept of leaving their child with someone else for most of the day was disquieting. "Our day care provider is marvelous," said one, "but I still wonder."

A number of new fathers commented they took time off from work to bring their infants to regular and emergency medical appointments. One dad said he hadn't expected how much he would worry when his son was sick, even if he didn't stay home from work to care for him. Another said he wished they had found a pediatrician who had early morning and late afternoon appointments, as he and his wife were using up vacation time on their son's doctor visits.

Probably the major aspect of working parenthood the fathers felt unprepared for was their wives' reactions to the situation. Wrote one father, " Due to my naivete I was a sitting duck for surprises. Expectations for our plans as working parents didn't end up happening. We didn't know how we would feel about working and leaving our son in child care until after he was born." Many fathers expressed concern as to how their spouses were handling the stress of separation from the baby and consequently how those feelings were directly effecting them. "She's more irritable than normal and tired all the time," wrote one dad. "I am more nervous, don't sleep as well and must plan my day more carefully." In general these dads recognized the importance of being supportive in

a variety of ways. "We both share in household chores," many men have said and their wives corroborate that, though a number of women express the opinion that Dad could be doing even more on the home front.

"I have less time for everything," a new dad wrote. This was a complaint echoed by a substantial number of new working fathers. "Being a working parent has created many more pressures and deprived me of nearly every leisure time activity that I formerly enjoyed," wrote one father. He added,"However, I didn't realize how devoted I would become to our little boy, either." Many fathers said they worked less, didn't bring work home, or cut back on overtime not only because their wife asked them to, but also because they wanted to. "I can't tell you how much I enjoy being with our daughter," reported one new father. Said another, "Even though I've cut back on working hours, I still manage to get the same amount or more accomplished each day. Getting home to our baby is a great motivator!"

When asked if they felt that their working had any effect on their baby, most new dads indicated they couldn't tell at this point. Others felt the effects were nothing but positive. "Our daughter is learning to trust lots of people: her parents, her day care provider, a senior neighbor lady who helps out." Wrote another, "Having both of us working provides security and flexibility in our family. We can provide an exciting growth environment for our daughter." Most new fathers did not feel their working had a harmful or negative effect on their ability to be a good parent to their baby.

No support for the working father

I suppose a few working mothers reading this might respond, "Well, there's no support for us working mothers, either!" While that certainly may be the case, I've been surprised at the depth of feeling with which many working fathers address this issue. Dads indicate their major source of support--and in some cases their only source--comes from their wives. "She encourages me to be a

nurturer, not just a father figure," wrote one dad. Many fathers commented on how helpful and understanding their spouses were, especially when job demands superceded family responsibilities. "I know she doesn't like it when I have to travel," said one father, "but she doesn't make it any more difficult for me than it already is." They verbalize appreciation for the many demands placed on a new working mother. "She's doing so much more around the house," wrote one dad. "It makes me want to pitch in when I see everything she has to do."

The workplace provides virtually no support according to the majority of fathers I've spoken to. "They ask how the baby is, but that's about it," said one dad. "I suppose knowing `that's the way it is' makes one endure," wrote another. Dads found little encouragement to take paternity leave, stay home with their baby when s/he was sick, work shorter hours, or leave early/come in late for pediatrician appointments. "This just isn't done in the corporate world," wrote one new father. One dad did take his daughter to work with him one day a week. While his co-workers approved, he found, "I couldn't accomplish anything." The workplace was the major area most working fathers felt should be providing them more support. They suggested that their employers supply on-site day care or day care reimbursements, allow new fathers to take "substantial" parental leaves (that also would be paid with job and position security), offer on-site seminars dealing with issues relevant to working parents, provide counseling for working parents, and develop work-day options, such as job sharing, flextime and part-time that would be applicable to male as well as female employees. One father summed his feelings up this way: "The corporate culture should be one where all employees are encouraged to be well rounded individuals. It is naieve to assume that the United States can maintain the same culture if individuals must make a sacrifice in their career, possessions, etc. in order to have a family."

While many fathers weren't actively seeking support from friends, they did appreciate the understanding those in similar circumstances provided. "Our friends that are working and have

children are easy to be with," wrote one dad. "We just don't see the others much anymore." Dads enjoyed the ability to "compare notes" not only on being a working father but also on their babies. Understandably many fathers bemoaned their lack of socialization in general. "I'd like to have a beer after work with my buddies," said one dad," but we're all working parents and no one has time." Another indicated this was a cause for concern with friends who were single. "They should be more understanding and not so quick to avoid our company just because we are parents now."

Most new fathers felt their own families (and their spouses) were a substantial support source. Grandparents frequently offered babysitting services, not only on weekends but weekdays as well. One dad spoke about how his father indicated pride in what his son was doing. "He told me he never could have taken care of a baby or clean house if my mother had been working. He admired how I helped out and that made me feel pretty good." Siblings in like circumstances were often cited as being especially supportive. "My brother is particularly understanding because he has a one and a half year old," a new dad wrote. "It's helpful to have him to talk to sometimes."

Pearls of wisdom from working fathers

When given the opportunity to pass on some words of wisdom, a number of the new fathers I spoke with simply passed. "Ask me twenty years from now." Said another, "He's our first and only six months old. We're still too new at this." Others felt their suggestions were more common sense than "pearls" of wisdom. These included: rest whenever you can, relax and take it easy, don't be afraid of handling a newborn (they don't break). They encouraged other new fathers to not go overboard with visitors the first few weeks, to start looking for day care before the baby is born and to take advantage of whatever help you can get around the house. A few dads talked about the special bond between parent and child that is there no matter what -- "your child really loves you!" Another father's advice was decidedly more practical: "Don't change

your work assignment, responsibilities, or any other major way you do your business for six months to a year after your baby's birth." A rather pragmatic view of working fatherhood was offered by this dad: "Expect it to be a lot of work and then it may be at least a little easier than you expected."

The 'new' dad?

No doubt you have recognized, Dad, that you are moving beyond, or have already passed by, the traditional model. For some of you a substantial number of the facets of that model still remain internally, externally or both. It's often difficult to shed those concepts we were brought up with, had become comfortable with and in fact expected to live with all our adult lives. Even though fewer than six percent of American families fit the old traditional mold, many of us still idealize that model as something we aspire to. Anything less is less than best.

Expressing your needs as a working father is an important step in leaving those "old" facets behind. Society can cling tenaciously to many of these concepts because its members are less than vocal about the need for supported change. Recognize this is difficult and in certain situations nearly impossible to do. Surveys show that women prefer sensitive men to the more rugged types, but the business community doesn't hold a man who puts family first in as high regard as the one who works overtime and Saturdays. This is changing - not radically, not quickly and in some quarters not substantially - but the movement is beginning. These changes won't be effected unless you insist that they are. If you hope the business climate will be different for your own sons and daughters someday, it is important that you and your working spouse look at ways you personally can affect some changes now.

AFTERWARD

Dan and I have been working parents now for almost nine years; in fact, this book will probably be published on the ninth anniversary of my return to work. It was November 27, the Monday after Thanksgiving, a cold and grey morning. Who says you don't remember the milestones of your life?

Since that time, I have worked various stages of part-time, full-time and full-time plus in a dizzying combination of jobs. Dan has started his own business during this time, which has had a significant impact on our working family life. We have had three more children, moved once, gave away a dog and acquired two cats. There have been times when I have predominantly been at home; there have been times when I feel like home is a way-station from one job or activity to another.

During the times I've been at home, I must admit that I do get "itchy." I watch my neighbor, a full-time working mother, leave for work in the morning taking her daughters along for the walk to their day care. Norma is usually dressed for the proverbial day at the office, while I am in a rather ratty bathrobe. We wave to each other and I'll sometimes think, "I wish I were her. I wish I had one specific job to do for eight hours instead of fifteen little jobs that span from now until ten tonight. It would be nice to be wearing a suit instead of sweats. She'll probably get to eat lunch out today instead of munching on congealed macaroni and cheese. She might have a stimulating project to work on, while I'll hear "MOMMA" approximately two hundred times today. That would be great."

And because I know Norma quite well, I know that when she waves at me, she's thinking, "I wish I were her. She hasn't been up since six a.m. trying to get herself all groomed for work. They'll have a chance to sit down to breakfast rather than eating cold toast as we walk to day care. She can spend time with her kids, take them to the park during the day, maybe even nap when the

baby naps this afternoon. These pantyhose are already driving me crazy and my boss has been in a foul mood for weeks. Staying home would be great."

What I think is true, then, is that the grass always looks greener on the other side of the fence. The fact is that the grass on both sides of the fence is more of an early-spring brown, which means it has some patches of green. Neither of these worlds is perfect. One of our jobs as working parents is to cultivate the green spots, maybe plant some flowers and help them bloom and then quit worrying what the neighbor's lawn looks like.

What I hope this book has given you is some fertilizer for your both the brown and green patches that symbolize your lives as working parents.

APPENDIX ONE

Resources

The following are a number of resources offering information, programs and/or support to expectant and new working parents. Those starred (*) have free or low cost brochures/pamphlets about day care available.

American Academy of Pediatrics, Dept. C*
P.O. Box 927
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007

The American Society for Psychoprophylaxis in Obstetrics (ASPO/Lamaze)
1840 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 204
Arlington, VA 22201
- information regarding childbirth education programs; bookselling service

Catalyst
230 Park Avenue
New York, New York
- information from the Career and Family Center regarding issues that affect two career families

Child Care Action Campaign*
99 Hudson Street, Room 1233
New York, NY 10013

Children's Defense Fund
1520 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

Coping with the Overall Pregnancy/Parenting Experience (COPE)
37 Clarendon Street
Boston, MA 02116
- support and information for expectant and new parents; Managing Work and Family programs for working parents

Day Care Council of America*
1602 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

Family Resource Coalition
230 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 1625
Chicago, IL 60601
- a national group providing information regarding local resources for parents, as well as programs and publications for those working with parents

Health and Human Resources*
Department of Health, Education and Welfare
400 South Sixth Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20013

International Childbirth Education Association (ICEA)
PO Box 20048
Minneapolis, MN 55420
- information regarding childbirth education programs; bookselling service

LaLeche League International
9616 Minneapolis Avenue
Franklin Park, IL 60131
- information about local LaLeche groups providing support and education for breastfeeding; publications

Minnesota Early Learning Design (MELD)
123 East Grant Street
Minneapolis, MN 55403
- support and information for new parents through parent-lead discussion groups

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)*
1834 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20009

National Directory of Child Care Information and Referral Agencies
California Child Care Resource and Referral Network
809 Lincoln Way
San Francisco, CA 94122
- publishes a national directory of child care information and referral agencies

Women Working Home
Marion Behr and Wendy Lazar
24 Fishel Road
Edison, NJ 08820

Yale Bush Center in Child Development and Social Policy
Box 11 A Yale Station
New Haven, CT 06520
- research and information on infant care leaves

APPENDIX TWO

Suggested Reading List

BREASTFEEDING

Dana, Nancy and Anne Price. SUCCESSFUL BREASTFEEDING. Meadowbrook, 1985.

International Childbirth Education Association. BREASTFEEDING SAMPLER. ICEA, 1984 and 1985. Titles include: Breastfeeding: Concerns and Solutions, Getting Ready to Breastfeed Your Baby and How To Breastfeed Your Baby.

LaLeche League International. THE WOMANLY ART OF BREASTFEEDING. New American Library, 1981.

Mason, Diane and Diane Ingersoll. BREASTFEEDING AND THE WORKING MOTHER. St. Martin, 1986.

Olds, Sally Wendkos. THE COMPLETE BOOK OF BREASTFEEDING. Bantam, 1977.

Presser, Janice. BREASTFEEDING. Knopf, 1983.

Pryor, Karen. NURSING YOUR BABY. Harper, 1973.

Rice, Ilene. HEARTSTART. Heartstart Publications, 1986.

Riordan, Jan. A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO BREASTFEEDING. C. V. Mosby, 1983.

Stanway, Penny. BREAST IS BEST. American Baby Books, 1978.

Worth, Cecilia. BREASTFEEDING BASICS. McGraw-Hill, 1983.

CAREERS, WORKING COUPLES

Bird, Caroline. THE TWO PAYCHECK MARRIAGE. Rawson, Wade, 1979.

Blackwell, William and Muriel Blackwell. WORKING PARTNERS, WORKING PARENTS. Broadman, 1979.

Children's Defense Fund. A CORPORATE READER: WORK AND FAMILY LIFE IN THE 1980'S. Children's Defense Fund, 1983.

Boggs, Sue H. IS A JOB REALLY WORTH IT? Quality Publishers, 1979.

Curley, Jaune. THE BALANCING ACT II. Chicago Review Press, 1981.

Hall, Francine and Douglas T. Hall. THE TWO CAREER COUPLE. Addison, 1979.

Kimball, Gayle. THE 50/50 MARRIAGE. Beacon Press, 1983.

Lasswell, Marcia. EQUAL TIME. Doubleday, 1983.

Roland, Alan and Barbara Harris. CAREER AND MOTHERHOOD: STRUGGLES FOR A NEW IDENTITY. Human Sciences Press, 1979.

Rowatt, Wade. THE TWO CAREER MARRIAGE. Westminster Press, 1980.

Ryglewicz, Hilary and Pat Koch Thayer. WORKING COUPLES. Sovereign, 1980.

White, Margaret. SHARING CARING: THE ART OF RAISING KIDS IN TWO-CAREER FAMILIES. Prentice-Hall, 1982.

CHILD CARE/DAY CARE

Auerbach, Stevanne. CHOOSING CHILDCARE. Dutton, 1981.

Blum, Marian. THE DAY CARE DILEMMA. Lexington Books, 1983.

Brazelton, T. Berry. WORKING AND CARING. Delacourte, 1985.

Clarke-Stewart, Alison. DAYCARE. Harvard University Press, 1982.

Diamond, Franna. THE CHILD CARE HANDBOOK: NEEDS, PROGRAMS AND POSSIBILITIES. Children's Defense Fund, 1982.

Dreskin, William and Wendy. THE DAY CARE DECISION. M. Evans, 1983.

Filstrup, Jane Merrill. MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY: DAY CARE ALTERNATIVES. Teachers College Press, 1982.

Galinsky, Ellen. THE NEW EXTENDED FAMILY. Houghton-Miflin, 1977.

Glickman, Beatrice and Nesha B. Springer. WHO CARES FOR THE BABY? Schocken, 1978.

Ross, Kathy Gallagher. A PARENT'S GUIDE TO DAY CARE. Self-Counsel Press, 1984.

Scarr, Sandra. MOTHER CARE, OTHER CARE. Basic Books, 1984.

Siegel-Gorelick, Bryna. THE WORKING PARENTS' GUIDE TO CHILD CARE. Little, Brown, 1983.

U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. A PARENTS' GUIDE TO DAY CARE. DHHS Publication No. (OHDS) 80-30254. available for $4.75 from the U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

Ziegler, Edward F. DAY CARE: SCIENTIFIC AND SOCIAL POLICY ISSUES. Auburn House, 1982.

HANDBOOKS, MANUALS AND GUIDES

Adams, Judith A. A WORKING MOTHER'S SURVIVAL MANUAL. J.A. Enterprises, 1982.

Ashery, Rebecca Sager and Michele Margolin Basen. THE PARENTS WITH CAREERS WORKBOOK. Acropolis Books, 1983.

Berg, Barbara. THE CRISIS OF THE WORKING MOTHER. Simon and Schuster, 1986.

Bodin, Jeanne and Bonnie Mitleman. MOTHERS WHO WORK. Ballantine, 1983.

Cahill, Mary Ann. THE HEART HAS ITS OWN REASONS. LaLeche League International, 1983.

Curtis, Jean. WORKING MOTHERS. Doubleday, 1977.

Gillis, Phyllis. ENTREPRENEURIAL MOTHERS. Rawson Associates, 1984.

Greenleaf, Barbara. HELP: A HANDBOOK FOR WORKING MOTHERS. Berkeley, 1980.

Greywolf, Elizabeth S. THE SINGLE MOTHERS HANDBOOK. Quill, 1984.

Kuzma, Kay. WORKING MOTHERS. Stratford, 1981.

Lowman, Kaye. OF CRADLES AND CAREERS. LaLeche League International, 1984.

Mayer, Gloria Gilbert. 2001 HINTS FOR WORKING MOTHERS. Quill, 1983.

Norris, Gloria and JoAnn Miller. THE WORKING MOTHER'S COMPLETE HANDBOOK (2nd edition). Dutton, 1984.

Olds, Sally Wendkos. THE WORKING PARENTS' SURVIVAL GUIDE. Bantam, 1983.

Pincus, Cynthia Sterling. DOUBLE DUTIES: AN ACTION PLAN FOR THE WORKING WIFE. Contemporary, 1978.

Shaevitz, Marjorie. THE SUPERWOMAN SYNDROME. Warner, 1984.

PARENTING

Beck, Joan. BEST BEGINNINGS: GIVING YOUR CHILD A HEAD START IN LIFE. G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1983.

Boston Women's Health Book Collective. OURSELVES AND OUR CHILDREN. Random House, 1978.

Brazelton, T. Berry. INFANTS AND MOTHERS. Delacourte, 1971. TODDLERS AND PARENTS. Delacourte, 1974. ON BECOMING A FAMILY. Delacourte, 1980.

Caplan, Frank. THE FIRST TWELVE MONTHS OF LIFE. Grosset and Dunlap, 1978.

Cobb, John. BABYSHOCK: A SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR THE NEW MOTHER. Prentice-Hall, 1981.

Dodson, Fitzhugh. HOW TO PARENT. Castle Books, 1970. HOW TO FATHER. Nash, 1974. HOW TO DISCIPLINE-WITH LOVE, FROM CRIB TO COLLEGE. New American Library, 1978.

Dreikurs, Rudolf. CHILDREN THE CHALLENGE. Dutton.

Dix, Carol. THE NEW MOTHER SYNDROME. Doubleday, 1985

Eagan, Andrea Boroff. THE NEWBORN MOTHER; STAGES OF HER GROWTH. 1985.

Fraiberg, Selma. THE MAGIC YEARS. C. Scribner's Sons, 1959.

Galinsky, Ellen. BETWEEN GENERATIONS: THE SIX STAGES OF PARENTHOOD. Times Books, 1981.

Greene, Bob. GOOD MORNING, MERRY SUNSHINE: A FATHER'S JOURNAL OF HIS CHILD'S FIRST YEAR. Atheneum, 1984.

Greenberg, Martin. THE BIRTH OF A FATHER. Continuum Press, 1985.

Growing Child/Growing Parent. GROWING PARENT, A SOURCEBOOK FOR FAMILIES. Contemporary Books, 1983.

Jaffe, Sandra and Jack Viertel. BECOMING PARENTS: PREPARING FOR THE EMOTIONAL CHANGES OF FIRST-TIME PARENTHOOD. Atheneum, 1980.

Jones, Sandy. TO LOVE A BABY. Houghton-Miflin, 1981. CRYING BABY, SLEEPLESS NIGHTS. Warner, 1983

Kamerman, Sheila B. PARENTING IN AN UNRESPONSIVE SOCIETY: MANAGING WORK AND FAMILY LIFE. Free Press, 1980.

Kuzma, Kay. PRIME-TIME PARENTING. Rawson, Wade, 1980.

Princeton Center for Infancy and Early Childhood. THE PARENTING ADVISOR. Anchor Press, 1977.

Rakowitz, Elly and Gloria S. Rubin. LIVING WITH YOUR NEW BABY: A POSTPARTUM GUIDE FOR MOTHERS AND FATHERS (2nd edition). Berkeley, 1986

Rozdilsky, Mary Lou and Barbara Banet. WHAT NOW? A HANDBOOK FOR NEW PARENTS. Scribner, 1975

Salk, Lee. YOUR CHILD'S FIRST YEAR. Cornerstone Library, 1985.

Sears, William. CREATIVE PARENTING. Everest House, 1982.

Spock, Benjamin. DR. SPOCK'S BABY AND CHILD CARE. Pocket Books, 1985.

Sullivan, S. Adams. THE FATHERS' ALMANAC. Doubleday, 1980

White, Burton L. A PARENTS' GUIDE TO THE FIRST THREE YEARS. Prentice-Hall, 1980.

Wolfson, Randy Meyers and Virginia DeLuca. COUPLES WITH CHILDREN. Dembner Books, 1981.

WORKING AND PREGNANCY

Fitzpatrick, Jean Grasso. PREGNANCY AND WORKING. Avon, 1984.

Kamerman, Sheila B. MATERNITY POLICIES AND WORKING WOMEN. Columbia University Press, 1984.

Morrone, Wenda Wardell. PREGNANT WHILE YOU WORK. Berkley, 1986.

Paulson, Jane Hughes. WORKING PREGNANT. Fawcett Columbine, 1984.

Wheatley, Meg and Marcie Schorr Hirsch. MANAGING YOUR MATERNITY LEAVE. Macmillan, 1983.

About the Author

MARY PARYS O'BRIEN returned to work when her oldest daughter was seven weeks old. Now the mother of four--ages 9, 6 1/2, 4 1/2 and almost 2--Mary knows firsthand the realities of being a working mother. She is a certified childbirth educator, parent educator and work and family life consultant. Among the many programs Mary offers is "Mom and Dad Go Back to Work," a series for expectant and new working parents from which this book grew. In 1986 Mary was cited by Childbirth Educator magazine as one of five finalists for "Childbirth Educator of the Year." The O'Briens--Dan, Mary, Molly, Tom, Maggie and Bridget--live in Minneapolis, MN.

About the Artist

JAN RUBY BAIRD describes herself as a "wife, mother, artist, parent educator, friend, thinker"...among other things! A former art instructor in Rochester, New York, Jan's works are well known in a number of different venues. Her "Childbearing: The Classic Series" (Childbirth Graphics, Inc.) has won her much acclaim and respect among her peers and childbirth educators. A collection of her works is slated to be featured at the Smithsonian Institute during a summer, 1987 exhibition on childbirth. Currently she is sharing her talents with parents and colleagues as a parent educator at the Edina Family Center. Jan and her family--husband Barclay, Erin 5 and Michael 3--live in Edina, MN.

Jan and Mary plan to collaborate on additional projects for expectant and new parents in the near future.